

# MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

## AGES OF FAITH.

---

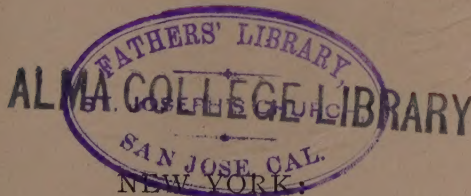
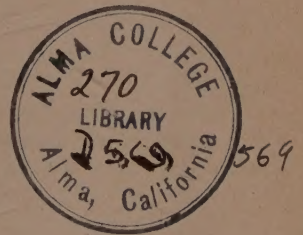
BY

KENELM H. DIGBY.

VOLUME THE SECOND,

CONTAINING

BOOKS V. AND VI.



P. O'SHEA, PUBLISHER,

45 WARREN STREET.

1889.

2757





# SUMMARY.

---

## BOOK V.

### CHAPTER I.

THE predominant passion of the ages of faith, a thirst for justice—The wants of man's nature—The necessity for having a Divine object felt and shown—The language of the ancient writers on this head. . . . . p. 19

### CHAPTER II.

The voice of the Church was the voice of desire—The sacred offices expressed the thirst for justice, and originated in that desire—Sketch of their history—The observance of the canonical hours—The divisions of time—The divisions of the office—The necessity for a uniform liturgy—The mode of celebrating the Christian mysteries always essentially the same—The ecclesiastical offices considered in relation to beauty, justice, and truth—Origin and use of ceremony—The ceremonies of the Catholic Church—Objections against them considered—The moral value and beauty of the institution of the canonical hours—The opinion of the holy fathers respecting the night—The vigils—The night of the middle ages—The offices of the morning and day—The holy mass—Nones—Vespers—Complin . . . . . p. 29

### CHAPTER III.

General observations respecting the sacred offices—Origin and explanation of the universal adoption of the Latin tongue in the public offices of the Western Church—Remarks on the language of the Catholic liturgy—Its symbolic character—The Christian use of symbolism, in relation to language and ceremonies—Admirable beauty of the offices—Their historic character—The Litanies—Remarks on the objections brought against them—Grandeur and decorum observed in all parts of the Divine office—Its sublime poetry—The beauty and solemnity of what was also visible in the Church—Magnificence in that respect of the middle ages—The use of incense traced and explained—The custom of having lights—An occasion of great splendor—The procession—Its origin and importance—Its symbolic character, described by St. Bernard. p. 59

### CHAPTER IV.

Importance of music in the estimation of the ancients, of the holy fathers, and of the scholastic theologians—History of Church music—That of the middle ages: its excellence and characteristics—Origin and use of organs—The aurea missa—Decline of Church music . p. 89

### CHAPTER V.

Opinion of the middle ages respecting the music of the Divine offices—Psalmody, the spirit of the Psalms, became the spirit of the age—The people joined with the clergy in singing the office—Provision every where to meet the love of the people for the Catholic offices—Wisdom of this—The external behavior of men in the churches regulated—Why importance was

attached to it—What devotions recommended—Beads—Books—The eulogia—No one to enter armed—Reverence due to the sacred mysteries, and the rules which it dictated—A visit to a Catholic church—The approach; the bells; the paradise and portal; the multitude within, and the variety of character which it comprised—Charm of this spectacle—General impressions vary with the hour—The suppliant crowd—The ineffable presence—Experience of the ages of faith in respect to it—The churches are only monuments of it—The effects described by St. Bonaventura, and verified in Tasso . . . . . p. 102

## CHAPTER VI.

The love of men for the sacred offices evinced in ancient characters and foundations—Express testimony by the historians of the middle age—Examples—Inferences to be drawn from this fact: that men must have been thoughtful and intellectual, virtuous and pure, or penitent; lovers of peace, and of simple manners, conformable to nature; familiar with the dawn—Charm and importance of the first hours . . . . . p. 131

## CHAPTER VII.

Origin of the Christian festivals—Their history—The poetic interest which their course imparted to the year—Mode of their celebration—The vigil—Its use and meaning—The discipline of the ages of faith with respect to fasting—The intention and effects of this—The term "obligation" as applied to festivals—The observance of the Lord's day during the middle ages—Festivals of obligation how observed—Octaves, Origin and importance of them—The popular customs associated with the Christian festivals, distinguished—What were good—What were abuses and condemned . . . . . p. 154

## CHAPTER VIII.

With what mind the festivals were observed—They were studied, explained, and celebrated as strictly religious—They were dramatic—What was the style, in consequence, observed in the instructions of the clergy—Sermons of St. Bernard—Correspondence of the popular devotion—Their symbolic character—Sermon of Richard of St. Victor—The festivals of our Lady, and their origin—Language of the ages of faith respecting devotion to the Blessed Virgin—The meditations of St. Bonaventura respecting it—Objections to the Christian festivals considered—Their celebration conducted to important ends, in an intellectual and moral point of view—The anniversaries of the saints considered in this respect—The objections of heretics answered—The beneficial political tendency of the festivals—The beauty of the Divine offices in relation to the changes required by the season—Constancy and variety united in the Church order—Why the moderns are insensible to the excellence of the Catholic ritual—The festival of the Resurrection considered in explanation of this—Instance of its effect on two friends—Their devout assistance at its solemnities from Holy Week till the end of the octave—Fervor of the middle ages on these festivals—The indifference of the moderns . . . . . p. 189

## CHAPTER IX.

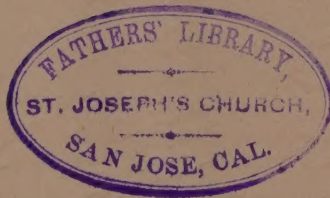
The thirst after justice witnessed in the devotion of men generally in ancient times—The religious character of the middle ages—Their connection with the doctrine of the Passion—Devotion of the laity—Instruction of the laity—Examples of laical piety—The confraternities and their orders diffused holiness through society—The rules given to chivalry had the same end in view—The forms of benedictions given to children remarkable—Zeal and exertion of the laity in behalf of religion—The decrees of princes in its favor—Traditions of government



insured its respect—The zeal of the middle ages was nourished by devout practices, and by observance of all essential duties—Holiness of domestic life—A monastic spirit infused into it—Style of conversation, religious and philosophical—Laics aspire to convert infidels—Their familiarity with the Holy Scriptures—Laics defend religion with their pens—Influence of the lay society on the clergy—Language and conduct of laics to the clergy—Their love for the clergy—Grounds of that love—Examples . . . . . p. 230

## CHAPTER X.

General reflections—What object engrossed the love of men in ages of faith—The zeal of those ages defended against the objections of the moderns—The system called “ of the just medium” examined and condemned—Catholic prudence contrasted with the prudence of the indifferent—Zeal inseparable from a thirst for justice—The zeal of the middle ages a source as well as a result of faith—The spirituality of those times gradually impaired by the Machiavelian policy of governments—The effects which this has produced. . . . . p. 271



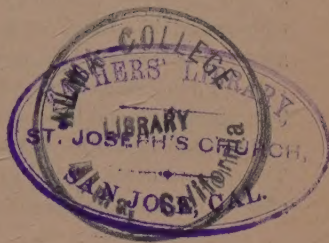




# SUMMARY.

## BOOK VI.

---



### CHAPTER I.

Effects of the thirst after justice—Devotion included imitation as well as prayer—The view taken by modern historians—General character of the middle ages in relation to justice—Their peculiar merit—The satirists and censors—Tendency of the ancient works of fiction—The number of the just not revealed by history . . . . . p. 289

### CHAPTER II

Historic difficulties opposed to its discovery—What kind of evidence may be had—Incidental testimonies—Tone of literature—Tendency of the confraternities, and of chivalrous orders—Legislation and government of the ancient Catholic state—Direct testimonies—Justice of men in different ranks ; general views taken by ancient writers . . . . . p. 313

### CHAPTER III.

Domestic manners—Filial and parental duties—Fidelity of dependents—Sanctity of marriage—Justice in relation to property—Hospitality—Domestics—Feudal life and its rural exercises—Whole families composed of saints—The women of the ages of faith—Character of female piety in Catholic countries—The conventual life of nuns, and its influence on domestic manners—The recluses—Origin of the cloistral life of women—The convent of the middle ages—Learning of the nuns—Moral and social condition of women in ages of faith contrasted with pagan times—Women of the Catholic type a new creation—Judgment of the holy fathers—Influence of women in respect to justice—The Catholic lady, her justice and charity—The erudition and political importance of some in the middle ages—Their heroic virtue—The maternal character—Modesty and grace of daughters ; their employments and recreations—The spirit which presided over marriage—The marital love of the middle ages—Heroic examples—The regard and respect evinced for women . . . . . p. 341

### CHAPTER IV.

The loves of the middle ages sanctified and rendered a source of moral improvement ; associated with the life of faith and the hopes of heaven—Examples of devotion in love—The danger and evil incident to it—How atoned for . . . . . p. 415



## CHAPTER V.

Institution and action of the clergy in relation to justice—Discipline—Celibacy—The hierarchy—Supremacy of the Roman See—Origin of its temporal power—The council of cardinals—Legates—The episcopal state in general—The parish priests—Life in community—Synods—Appeals to Rome—Support of the clergy in relation to justice—Tithes—Annats, exemptions—Reverence shown to the sacerdotal office—General causes of promotion—No national and local prejudices—Intellectual greatness of the episcopacy in the middle ages—Provisions against simony—Justice of the men in ecclesiastical order—The popes—The sacred college—The bishops—The parish priests—Distribution of the church revenues in relation to justice—Charity and poverty of the clergy personally—Manual labor practised by them : keep aloof from temporal affairs—Origin of their employment in the civil government—Their integrity in regard to it—The beneficial result of society—Their frugality and moderation—They keep aloof from profane amusements—Their hospitality—Their direct influence in regard to justice—Their particular and incidental action—Their ordinary and universal action—The missionaries of the middle ages—The preachers of the middle ages—Ideas of the moderns respecting them—The sermons of the middle age in relation to justice—In relation to eloquence and taste, and effect—Incidental evidence furnished by them to the spirit of those times . . . . . 424

## CHAPTER VI.

The justice of the ages of faith, heroic—Consequent interest inspired by Catholic histories—Grandeur and virtue of the middle ages—The local histories—The heroic justice of canonized saints—The high standard proposed to all men—The mercantile character—The knightly character—The moral philosophy of the middle ages opposed to the utilitarian—The Catholic doctrine respecting motives . . . . . 545

## CHAPTER VII.

The justice of the ages of faith, supernatural ; yet in harmony with nature—Testimony of the Gentiles—Insufficiency of nature—The morality of faith higher, and in some points different—A supernatural standard proposed to all men—Opposition to the sensual ideal—Thoughts of the ancients respecting it . . . . . 569

## CHAPTER VIII.

The justice consequent on confession and penance—Origin and history of the institution—Thoughts of the middle age respecting it—Zeal for effecting conversions to justice—The confessional in relation to the feelings of men—Its influence and effects—Objections of the moderns respecting examination of conscience, penance, and absolution—Indulgences—Their origin—Doctrine of the church—The practical effects . . . . . 583

## CHAPTER IX.

Contrast between the Catholic morality and that of the ancient and modern world—A glance at the justice of the Gentiles, and at that of the moderns—Change of manners consequent on the change of faith—The proposition that morality is now better understood, considered—Essential character of the modern systems—Testimony of their supporters—Contrast of modern to Catholic manners in relation to the love of truth, to the delicate sense of justice, to integrity in public life, to the absence of ambition, to national justice, to wisdom of government, to the obedience of subjects, to purity of morals in the people, to the sense of a spiritual combat, to the ideal and realization of a just man, to practical consistency with the Christian doctrine, and to heroism in justice . . . . . 621



## CHAPTER X.

Other features of the Catholic morality—Its precise and certain law—Its practical and poetic character—Its provisions against all extravagance—Its strictness respecting common duties—Payment of creditors—Justice of municipal laws—Provisions against usury—It included all virtues in one—Its influence even upon art—Effects seen in the edifices of the middle age—General ideas of justice derived from the example of Christ—From the models which he proposed, and from the observation of the visible world . . . p. 657

## CHAPTER XI.

The subject resumed—Doctrines were the foundation of duties, and the divine authority their principle of force and efficacy—Motives furnished by the knowledge of a future judgment—The Catholic morality was spiritual and living—The charge against it of superstition refuted—Its efficacy in the determination of the will—Free agency of man and power of the will, maintained, and the practical consequences in the middle ages—The fatalism of the moderns, and the custom of life resulting from it—Genuine and exalted merit of the Catholic morality acknowledged by a late philosopher . . . p. 674

## CHAPTER XII.

Objection to the Catholic morality on the supposed ground of its incompatibility with the Christian doctrine of justification, refuted by the testimony of the holy fathers—Of the scholastic and mystic authors—Of the church herself in her liturgy—Of the laity, philosophers, and poets, and of the tombs and other material monuments of the middle ages—Conclusion. . . . . p. 688



MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

---

BOOK V.





# MORES CATHOLICI;


OR,

## AGES OF FAITH.

---

### THE FIFTH BOOK.

#### CHAPTER I.

T the fourth counsel of the mystic song a sudden lustre, like the golden beams which brighten up the horizon at the evening hour, illuminated my heart. Methought a countless multitude of men, of every age, and order, and degree, passed before me. Emperors and princes were there, and mitred fathers, and whole hosts wrapped up in sable weeds; nor were wanting the ideal comrades of our youth, steel-clad knights, and gentle poets of the bower and hall; grave magistrates too followed amidst a throng of citizens and peasants, in which were some who toiled in trades laborious which seem base to the pride of mortals, and others who craved alms for sweet charity, and around each did shine an unimaginable light, encircling him as a luminary of eternal vision, which clearer than with any voice proclaimed his everlasting principedom. These were all they whose wishes tended to justice; for they shouted forth "Blessed," and ended with "I thirst." O how after each pause the harmony sounds more and more strange to ears of flesh and blood. We know, indeed, that all spirits on this earth hunger and thirst, as all mourn. Who has not observed, while wandering on the shore of brief life with wretched men, the careful provision made to satisfy the thirst for riches, the thirst for singularity, the thirst for novelty, the thirst for change, the thirst for honors, the thirst for the first seats, and for hearing Rabbi, the thirst for knowledge, perhaps, so praised by that Chæronean sage, who says, "that letters and philosophy should imprint in our soul a passion similar to thirst and hunger, which would evince its power if we were deprived of them;" but unless when enjoying such visions from reverting to the traditions and monuments of ages of faith, where, O where is there any indication discernible among Adam's children of attention to the thirst for justice?

"My soul thirsteth after thee," said holy Israel's king. "Mark," adds St. Augustine, "how he thirsted. There are who thirst, but not after God. Whoever feels the ardor of desire, that desire is the thirst of his soul. And see how many desires are in the hearts of men ! One desires gold, another possessions, another cattle, another houses, another honors. See how many desires, and how few men there are who ever say, 'my soul thirsteth after Thee,' for men thirst after the world, and they know not that they are in the desert of Idumæa, where their souls ought to thirst after God."\*

In submitting history to the investigations required here, there are many and various points to be kept in view. We should, in the first place, remark, how the need of a divine object for the wants of the soul was recognized, from which in a great measure followed the offices and festivals of religion, which must, therefore, be surveyed in order. This research will demonstrate what a zeal for religion animated men in all classes of society. And thus far our attention will seem to have been confined to verify the existence of the thirst which is blessed : but from this point, its fulfilment will be our theme; for I shall then proceed to show in how admirable a manner the religious sentiment was reduced to action, which will lead on to a particular investigation of the state of morality in the ages which we review ; when I shall have illustrated this statement by the evidence of contemporaneous authorities it will be necessary through regard for the mistakes and errors of later times, to show on what principle that whole system of morality depended, and what was its peculiar tone. After which inquiry, I shall bring the sixth book to an end.

All ages have been characterized by certain leading passions, which have impelled men to pursue some particular object of apparent good. Some, like the epoch which is distinguished by the rise of the new opinions in the fifteenth century, have been ages of avarice, of the reign of gold, when men thirsted after riches as the supreme felicity for which they were ready to make the sacrifice of their souls, pledging them to Satan, and of their bodies, literally offering them to the Jews. Others, like those we read about in times more remote, have been ages of what was vainly termed military glory ; others, like those associated on every tongue with names illustrious, ages of art and literature, because though no error of philosophy and no temporary delusion of the multitude could totally suppress the cry of nature, yet during those intervals, the possession of gold, military glory, art and literature, were held up to the admiration of men who always assent to a resolute affirmation, as being the proper object and the farthest end of their desires and activity. We judge thus of times prior to Christianity from what we find in the writings of their eminent men, and from what has been transmitted to us respecting their customs and institutions, and by using the same process of investigation in reference to the middle ages, we shall find reason to conclude, that during the long period which they comprise, the object recognized as

\* Tractat. in Ps. 62.



being the legitimate end of all mortal desire, of all civil legislation, and of all individual exertion, was **not** gold, not military glory, not art or literature, but, strange and wondrous as it may seem to many, the eternal happiness of the soul, or the fulfilment of justice in accomplishing the will of God. The conclusion would not be that these were ages of perfect justice or of social perfection, which can only reign within the supernal city of God triumphant. Nay, where souls are imbruted in matter, the face of external things may often seem less disturbed than where men of desire with heavenly thirst inspired, are struggling to set them right; but that the ruling passion which can be always discerned in the history of these times amidst the innumerable disorders to which as at all other periods of the world men were subject, cannot be otherwise designated than as the thirst after justice; and if the proof be demanded, we find it in the institutions, legislation, and whole form of society which distinguished them, for which no parallel can be found in the annals of mankind, and which no ingenuity can trace to any other origin. The blessed mourning from which we have so lately turned seems to present itself to us again in this place; for in the thirst after justice lies the secret of the inexhaustible tears and profound genius of the middle ages. Precious tears, which flowed in limpid legends, in admirable poems, in sublime imagery. Yes, these complaints which they make of the course of things around them, from which modern writers attempt to deduce such calumnious inferences, prove only that they felt the eternity of that mystery which had its consummation on Calvary. They saw, as a living historian remarks, that Christ was still on the cross, and not likely soon to descend from it—that the passion continues and will continue. Behold, these old statues in the cathedrals of the middle age. See how they implore with joined palms the long wished for and terrible moment when man for judgment is to wake from clay, wake for that great sentence of universal retribution which is to put an end to the ineffable sorrow which has so long oppressed them. The present race of men are accustomed to look with indifference at the great crimes of nations, referring them either to the blind decrees of inexorable fate, or only founding on them commercial speculations, with the hope of enriching their own coffers. France, encouraged by some secret source of meanness and profligacy in the administrators of greater power, is thus permitted to run her career from Ancona to the Tagus, unstigmatized by common voice, as if all sense of shame and honor were extinct in human breasts; but the cry of the middle ages in view of the calamities and injustice of men, while waiting for the hour of Almighty vengeance, might remind us of those words from the summit of the mystical cross, “*Tristis usque ad mortem.*”

The sages of antiquity were not wholly insensible to the necessity of having in view amidst the perturbations and vicissitudes of life, a divine instead of a human end. Well had the Athenian in Plato maintained *χρῆναι τὸ μὲν σπουδαῖον σπονδάζειν, τὸ δὲ μὴ σπουδαῖον μὴ*,\* and Plato himself continually shows

\* De Legibus VII.

the importance of having one supreme object, to which looking always, we may direct all our words and actions. He would have this question constantly addressed to his disciples, *Ὁ θαυμάσιε σὺ δὲ δὴ ποῖ ἀκοπεῖς; τί ποτ' ἐκεῖνό ἐστι το ἔν;*\* profound and searching words, at which even the children of light might sometimes tremble. Cicero in explaining why philosophy does not produce equal effects upon all minds, adduces the disposition of the youth with whom he converses to feel unsatisfied with every thing human, as an evidence of the superior nobleness of his nature, and of its capabilities to profit by philosophy. “Te natura excelsum quemdam videlicet, et altum, et humana despicientem genuit.”† Thus we read of Schiller, “his mind was not of that sort for which rest is provided in this world.” Faith imparted the privileges of genius, so as to make applicable to every man the mystic name of that founder of the religious metropolis of the Gauls, *ποθεινός*, the man of desire in whose breast was extinguished the expectation and even the desire of happiness on earth. His could only be a life of wishes, of longing, of labor, and restlessness; it must be made up all of sighs and tears, it must be all made of service, all made of fantasy, all made of hopes and fears, all adoration, duty, and observance, all humbleness, all patience, all purity, all trial. But while the thirst of the world appears in that real heart-rending sadness, which no imagination can ennoble, the affliction of soul arising from the thirst for justice, is always sublime in its expressions, and full of ideal grandeur, as is the piercing melodies of the choir. It was, however, in the schools of the true philosophers, and in the ages illuminated by the light of faith, that the vague and imperfect speculations of the ancient sages assumed the character of exact knowledge. “The reasonable spirit,” says Louis of Blois, “is so noble, that no frail good is able to satisfy it.”‡ *Mundus propter te factus est,*” says St. Bernard, “ideo mundum non ames, quia mundus non est te dignus, quum sis eo longe dignior.” Fallacious are the things which cannot always remain with us; things, adds St. Gregory, “which cannot expel the wants of our minds.” “Great is the dignity of the rational creature,” exclaims Hugo of St. Victor, “to whom nothing less than the supreme good suffices, and great is its liberty, since it cannot be compelled to accept it.”§ St. Augustin had said the same. “Nothing temporal can satisfy the soul, whose seat is eternity,”|| a proposition admitted by the modern poet, though with a senseless restriction.

---

“There is a fire  
And motion of the soul which will not dwell  
In its own narrow being, but aspire  
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;  
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,  
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire

\* De Legibus XII.

† Tuscul. II. 4.

‡ Ludovic. Blosii Instit. Spirit. cap. I.

§ Hugo de St. Vict. Eruditiones Theologicæ, tit. VII.

|| De Doctrin. Christ. Lib. I. 38.

Of aught but rest; a fever at the core  
 Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore."\*

The feeding of this fire is nevertheless represented by Plato, not as a fatal exercise, but as preserving the sustenance necessary for the intellectual health. "The entire soul," saith he, "in the best natures, receives a more honorable condition from possessing temperance and justice with wisdom, that the body acquires strength and beauty from health, in the same proportion as the soul is more honorable than the body; therefore, whoever has sense, will live, making all things tend to this end; in the first place honoring instruction which gives him such a soul, and despising every thing else."† How brightly that heavenly fire did burn even in the breath of warlike men in the most chivalrous ages, may be witnessed in Godfrey, when in a vision he is represented beholding the contrast of heaven and earth.

—————"He bended down  
 His looks to ground, and half in scorn he smil'd;  
 He saw at once earth, sea, flood, castle, town,  
 Strangely divided, strangely all compil'd,  
 And wonder'd folly man so far should drown.  
 To set his heart on things so base and vilde,  
 That servile empire searcheth, and dumb fame,  
 And scorns Heav'n's bliss, yet proff'reth Heaven the same."‡

In vain are all these public and private contrivances, day by day, continually throughout the year, to repel, as Thucydides says, τὸ λυπηρόν.§ "Born," says St. Gregory, "to the sorrows of this journey, we may indeed have arrived at that degree of fastidiousness as not even to know what we ought to desire."|| But what is naturally wished by the human will, is justice, as Duns Scotus profoundly observes, for that is its perfection; since, as the inferior irrational nature has a principle of tending to that which naturally agrees with it, so the will has necessarily a principle of tending to justice, which is the end that agrees with its nature.¶ Hugo of St. Victor makes a curious remark to show how clearly the human heart discerns that this is made for higher than earthly joys. When speaking of the words of Ecclesiastes, that all things under the sun are vanity, he adds, "I know not wherefore, but these words when they are read sound sweet in our ears. We are glad to be told of our evils, and what we do not love we nevertheless love to hear, for we do not love our evils, and yet we love to hear of them. The reason must be, that by hearing of the evil which we do not love, we are reminded of the good which we love; and this remembrance of good, even amidst evils, is sweet to the mind, and so much the sweeter as his evils are more bitter, which when hearing or feeling we discern to be far removed from the good to which we aspire. So that when the sorrows of our exile are described

\* Childe Harold. III.

† De Repub. lib. IX.

‡ Book XIV. ii.

§ Lib. II. 38.

|| Hom. in. Ev. 36.

¶ Duns Scoti, lib. II. Sentent. Dist. XXXIX. 9. 1.



and the extent of our misery declared, our mind awaking as if from a long sleep, suddenly remembers where it once was, and from a view of the mighty ruins, it calculates the height of the summit from which it fell. This is what renders lamentation so sweet to the miserable, and which converts the sighs and tears into such delicious food.”\*

The need, however, of a divine object appeared obvious, not only from a consideration of the dignity of our nature, but also from a sense of what was requisited to procure it so much of present happiness as was allowable in the world of wishes or innocent amidst the phantoms of sin and vanity. Did any one hope to satisfy his thirst from the broken cisterns of the world’s joy? Phædra, in her sickness, was a symbol of the destiny which awaited him; for of him it would soon be said with truth, you take pleasure in nothing; you change from one place to another; the present is displeasing, the absent is thought dearer.

The reason of which calamity was remarked by Cicero, when he says, that lust can never find an end.† The ambitious, as Cardan remarks, are all inconstant,‡ for no one who thirsts for visible things can ever be satisfied; since, as Hugo of St. Victor says, “the whole world would not suffice to man, who is the lord of the world. The eye cannot be satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing.”§ “The world cries, I fail; the flesh cries, I corrupt; the demon cries, I deceive; Christ cries, I restore; and yet,” adds St. Bernard, “such is the blindness and madness of our minds, that leaving Christ who invites us with loving words, we follow the failing world, the corrupting flesh, and the deceiving demon.” “The more one drinks,” says Richard of St. Victor, “the more one thirsts, for to satisfy the appetite of sensuality, the whole world would not suffice.”|| Nor is it more able to satisfy any of those vague desires which are so powerful in men of acutely sensitive minds, and which attach them with such affection to the remembrance of their youth, to the days that were embalmed with friendship and with poesy. “There was a time too, when I could weep,” cries Schiller; “O ye days of peace, thou castle of my father, ye green lovely valleys! O all ye Elysian scenes of my childhood! will ye never come again, never with your balmy sighing cool my burning bosom? Mourn with me nature! they will never come again, never cool my burning bosom with their balmy sighing—they are gone! gone! and may not return.” Return, perhaps, he would not that they should, as the profound thinkers of the middle age would remark, though his words express that wish. Hugo of St. Victor felt this mystery of our heart. “O ancient time, where art thou?” he exclaims.

\* Annotationes Elucidatoriæ in Ecclesiast. Hom. II.

† Tuscul. v. 7.

‡ De Sapientia, Lib. III.

§ Instit. Monast.-XXIX.

|| De præparatione animi ad contemplationem. cap. VI



"formerly while thou existed I loved thee, and now when thou hast ceased to exist, I love thee still ; nor can thy departure ever diminish my love for thee. While present I loved thee that thou might remain, and now that thou art no more I love thee, and yet I do not wish that thou shouldst return to me. Marvellous desire, incomprehensible affection. What can I love in thee if I am unwilling that thou shouldst exist, unwilling that thou shouldst return? What is that unheard of affection when a thing is loved, and yet its presence is not loved? Who will explain to me this love of my heart? The reason why I will not that thou shouldst return again is this, that I desire rather to be with thee where thou art now. Formerly I loved thee perversely, when I wished thee to remain with me where I was in exile, and now I love thee with more consideration, because I wish to be with thee in our country, where thou wilt subsist for ever."\* The experience of ages has demonstrated that without a view to the final consummation of all perfection in the reign of everlasting justice, men are sure to find nothing on their pilgrimage but disappointment, and without faith, despair. "Oblivion on this earth," cries a poet of France in a passage of unmingled bitterness, composed a few days before his death, "Oblivion on this earth, and beyond it. Behold, friend, my life and my eternity! Oblivion, for I have passed without leaving a trace! Oblivion! for how little place demands my grave! Poor, unknown, without a destiny, lost in the crowd, atom cast upon the vulgar wave, like every other mortal that floats with us, I have gathered and borne my crown of thorns, and beyond that nothing."† Behold the end of man's discontented thirst.

—————"O blind lust!  
O foolish wrath! who so dost goad us on  
In the brief life, and in the eternal then  
Thus miserably o'erwhelm us."‡

It is an error to suppose that these melancholy views of the natural life date from a recent epoch. Cardan, who never heard the modern strains, remarks "that in youth, when all things flourish, strength, senses, beauty, and genius, not unfrequently we feel life wearisome."§ All that is not God is nothing. Hence the certain disappointment which awaits our vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires ; for "the hopes of men," as Pindar says, "are tossed up and down upon a sea of error."|| Not the highest, firmest seats of earthly grandeur can give them rest.

Otho the third emperor, was openly joyous, but on account of the warning of blessed Heribert, he secretly groaned and wept.¶ Excepting the thirst for justice or the ardent desire of pleasing God, there is no movement of the soul which can be trusted without deliberation. "Noli inniti prudentiæ tuæ," says Solomon, "for," adds Richard of St. Victor, "man knows not what may conduce to good in

\* De Vanitate Mundi, Lib. II.

† Brugnot.

‡ Dante, Hell, XII.

§ Hieron. Cardani de Consolatione, Lib. II.

|| Olymp. car. XII.

¶ Drexellii aurifodina.

this life, in the number of the days of his peregrination, and in the time which passes away as a shadow.”\* Yes, it was well understood in the ages of faith that we need a divine object; that all else is mutable in man. “God alone,” says a French historian, “can rejoice over his work, and say that it is good. When man has toiled and conquered, he lets fall from his hands the long desired object, disgusted with it and with himself. Thus Alexander died of sadness, when he had conquered Asia, and Alaric when he had taken Rome. Godefroy of Bouillon had no sooner possession of the Holy Land than he sat discouraged on the earth, and languished for rest within its bosom.” Genius has no privilege here, for its most adored creation is sure to crumble into dust as soon as perfected. St. Augustin calls the image which we represent to ourselves in conceiving any object “the son of our heart.”† These sons die before us. To have this illustrated, you need only hear Schiller speaking of his Don Carlos, and accounting for its irregularity. “Some time elapsed,” says he, “between beginning and concluding it; I commenced the fourth and fifth acts with quite an altered heart.” Little strange should it seem that the struggles of individual unassisted genius prove insufficient, when even the sublimest works of religious art in ages of faith, indicate that they had not satisfied their authors. The gentle breath of that spirit which passed before the face of Daniel, carrying away kingdoms and breaking empires—that spirit which animated the artists of the middle age, which enabled them to raise those mountains of vaults and towers into the air by giving them a force greater than the arms of Titans; that spirit, let it work what it will, is always ill at ease in its dwelling. It can extend, and vary, and adorn it, but it cannot rest in it. “See these admirable cathedrals,” continues Michelet, “however beautiful they may be, with their towers and their saints in glories, they cannot contain it. Around the church we must build little churches; it must radiate with chapels. Beyond the altar we must raise an altar, a sanctuary behind the sanctuary.” Experience and reflection had convinced philosophers of this impossibility of satisfying the thirst of the soul with any thing human, and hence it is, that, as Novalis remarks,‡ “every science had its god, which was its end. Mechanics lived upon the perpetual motion, and their highest aim was the construction of a perpetuum mobile. So also chemistry had its menstruum universale, or its philosopher’s stone. Philosophy sought a first principle; mathematical, the quadrature of the circle; medical, a life elixir; political, a perfect freedom with government. The philosophers of the middle age all sought the unlimited, though they found only what is limited. They sought infinity, though they found only things.”

Ardent minds, endowed with the faculty of extending the fields of positive knowledge, would never in those spiritual ages have devoted themselves to dry studies if the imagination had not proposed a mysterious end as the desired result of their labors. Raymond Lully, Albert, Picus of Mirandola, Cardan, and others

\* De statu interioris hominis, Lib. I. c. 24. † De Trinitate, Lib. XI. ‡ Schriften, II. 231.

of that type, had all a nobler though less practical object in view than what is generally ascribed to them, ideal and often fantastical it is true, but still the secret fire which instigated them to such prodigious labors.

But this disappointment was the punishment of pride, methinks I hear some one reply. In the mere research or discovery of natural truth, these men would have found that rest and satisfaction which would have filled the vacuum of their hearts. Vain pretension of modern philosophers, which the weakest can see through; for if he who should say that he had opened certain great fountains which had been concealed, were to say this, at the same time exhibiting every indication of thirst, would it not be ridiculous? And is it not absurd when these men who affirm that they are not only the lords of fountains, but that they are themselves fountains, and able to irrigate the minds of all, while they promise this to others, are themselves parched up with thirst?\*

The great masters of the spiritual life discovered that it was the absence or presence of the thirst after justice which caused sadness or joy. "Si quis mundum omnino odit," says St. John Climacus, "hic tristitiam effugit. Porro, si quis qualibet visibilium rerum affectione mordetur, tristitia nondum liberatus est."† They saw that in fact men were constantly committing the double error of Narcissus and its opposite, concluding that a substance is a shadow, as often as they mistook a shadow for a substance. To privation all men are doomed on this earth, but those are least wretched who are pitied most; for it is not an imaginary good as many suppose to have one's affections centered upon a heavenly end, nor is it a substantial felicity to have reaped the shadows of human kindness which pass like the wind upon the rocks of the desert.

Goethe represents Tasso thirsting with all the ardor of a youthful and poetic genius for the friendship of Antonio, and we think him deserving of pity, because the latter meets his advances with the formality, and coldness, and distrust of one who makes the world his friend; but had he found a heart of other mould, and sought it so, there would have only been a postponement of the bitter hour. Happy the man who learneth, not by experience, when it is too late, the folly of placing confidence in the stability of creatures, or in any thing but in the very root and substance of justice. Are you laboring for the glory which Pindar promises to the conqueror, saying,

————— μέγα τὶ κλέος αἰεὶ  
ὃ τινὶ σὸν γέρας εἶπετ' ἀγλαόν?‡

Do you expect happiness in the friendship of those who are not associated in the privileges of eternal good? You are sowing the wind, you are embracing a shadow, "quia citius obliviscuntur tui homines, quam æstimas." What profound scars does misfortune and often too that which is called by fools prosperity, leave in

\* Cicero ad Herennium, Lib. IV. 6.

† Scala Paradisi Grad. II.

‡ Olymp. VIII.



the soul ! How quickly it uproots from a heart that is not Christian, all hope, and all poesy ! How soon one arrives with the evil genius of France at seeing in the life of nations as in that of individuals, a cold pleasantry of fate ! “Before the fall, man was full, because God was his centre ; but,” continues Baader, “after it he became internally void, God ceased to be his centre, and instead of filling him internally, compressed him from without, and hence being unable to sustain himself, he falls with a weight upon some thing external, in order to be sustained.” While thus placed he has but one alternative, to be wretched, seeking happiness in the love of creatures, or to be desiring and hoping, looking towards that primal seat, “ubi pulchritudo est et satietas æterna,” and praying in words like those with which Dante addresses the blessed spirits :—

—————“O perennial flowers  
Of gladness everlasting, that exhale  
In single breath your odors manifold;  
Breathe now; and let the hunger be appeased,  
That with great craving long hath held my soul,  
Finding no food on earth.”\*

It is when brought to this state, that according to the writers of the middle age, the Father draws a man to Christ : “for,” says the author of *Theologia Germanica*, “when any thing of this perfect good is uncovered and manifested to the soul as if in a moment there arises in that man a desire of approaching to this perfect good, and of uniting himself to it. The greater is this desire, the more is revealed to him, the more he thirsts, the more he is satisfied, and the more there is revealed to him, the more he desires and is drawn. Thus man is drawn to a conjunction with the eternal good, and this is the drawing of the Father.”† This was the direction given to the human intelligence during the supernatural ages of which I am attempting the history. It was accurately ascertained that the thirst of men was not for any secondary stream, but for the great original Source of justice. “At the banquet of God,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “there is but one dish, but despise it not, for it satiates. Many things are in the world, and none of them can fill man’s heart, but there is one good with God, and when this is found, all is found. ‘Ergo non in multitudine, sed in unitate satietes est.’”‡ The cry of the middle ages was that of the prophet, “Mihi autem ad hærerem Deo, bonum est,” interpreted according to the comment of St. Augustin. “Many were the opinions of philosophers respecting the chief good ; but he does not say, for me to have riches is good, or to have a crown and sceptre is good, or what some of them did not blush to say, for me to have sensual pleasure is good, or what sounds better, for me to have virtue is good, but for me to adhere to God, is good ; this, therefore, is the chief good of man.”§

\* Parad. XIX. † Cap. 54. ‡ Annot. in *Cœlest. Hierarch.* § De *Civitate Dei*, Lib. X. 18



## CHAPTER II.



**T**HAT such was the thirst of men during ages of faith, will appear more clearly as we proceed to inquire in what manner it developed itself, and what were its effects; for in truth, the whole life of man, the whole constitution of society, notwithstanding all its defects and abuses, was a continued display and evidence of its power. Who sees not that this was the thirst which imparted that theocratic character to the nations of Europe which induces philosophers like Vico to designate this period by the title of a divine and heroic age? Who does not discern that it was this thirst which moved men to cover the earth with so many noble monuments of piety, so many institutions of mercy; which rendered the whole life of so many great artists devoted to the honor and service of the Catholic Church, a kind of continual fever; which made men legislate for heaven rather than for earth, for the celestial rather than for the human republic; which drew some from the arid desert of the world to seek the living waters in the paradise of cloistered shades, and others to devote their bodies as witnesses for justice amidst the profane city; that this was the thirst which made the true devoted pilgrim pursue his way, so wearisome and long, undaunted, and firm, in his fixed resolve to measure kingdoms with his feeble steps? What else was it but this thirst which drew a St. Dorothea from Danzig to Agen, to venerate its holy relics, and to visit the hermit in the dark wood adjacent, for whose little chapel thrice she left her home, and made that long journey of desire in time of war, when robbers infested all the ways, from whose barbarous hands she suffered griefs unnumbered? What other cause impelled her afterwards to traverse Germany and Italy, to visit Rome for the jubilee, with such ardor, that during the whole pilgrimage, it is said, she slept but one night, which was the second after arriving in the holy city? Was it not also this thirst which gave rise to the interminable toils of Christian knight-hood, and to all the wondrous and acute provisions which were prescribed for ministering to the wants of human society? But that our path through this thick wood many not seem retrograde or endless, let us take some one object of unquestioned interest as the scope of our enterprise, that by the complete survey of it we may have a swift, delightful, as well as an instructive way, in exposing the admirable manifestation of this divine thirst.

In the school before our last, we had occasion to unfold the history of churches,

with all that related to their origin, construction, and adornment. We have seen with what truth the divine words may be applied to them, they were made by God. "Since," as St. Augustin says, "from him is every perfect gift, and that to construct those houses of prayer, he visited the minds of his faithful, excited their affections, supplied assistance, inspired their wills that they should will, assisted the efforts of their good will that they should accomplish, so that it was God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, that began and perfected all these things."\* The present has appeared the proper place for resuming, as it were, that story, and for considering the holy offices which were celebrated within these divinely constructed walls, and the various festivals which pious devotion commemorated there; for the voice of the Church was the language of desire, and the expression of that thirst which is assuaged only by justice, only by beholding the face of Him uncovered who is seen veiled upon the altar, who is himself in infinite perfection, justice, and truth; and if the historian of France can justly affirm that material monuments, such as the cathedrals of Paris, and Rheims, are great historical facts which speak more than long narrations, surely it will not be irrelevant to the enterprise of those who seek information respecting the intimate sentiments of the middle age, to inquire what was the purpose to which these were applied, what was the spirit within that marvellous symbolism which astonishes by its vastness and soothes by its peerless beauty?

To minds thoroughly imbued with a sense of justice, the world even in that age of Christian institutions presented a chaos. The soul of man aspired to order, and it hoped to find it in the symbolic ceremonies of faith. In the Church alone was the intelligence of man, his true life, and his rest. The constant love with which the divine offices were celebrated during the middle ages, can be referred to no other source but the disposition which is pronounced blessed from the mountain. It undoubtedly originated in a thirst for justice, a thirst for order, a thirst for the invisible supreme good of which all earthly forms of beauty were converted by it into symbols. Let us proceed, therefore, by first casting a glance at the history of their institution.

In the infancy of the Church immediately after the resurrection of our Lord, we find that his disciples were always in the temple praising and blessing God.† Philo Judæus wrote a book, "*De Vita Christianorum*," in which he describes how the Christians passed their time in public psalmody and hymns, keeping vigils during the night, and singing in praise of God, making stations at altars and joining in alternate chorus.‡ Lucian, the atheist, in one of his dialogues, laughs at the Christians for passing whole nights in singing hymns and vigils.§ Pliny relates to Trajan that they used to assemble before light to sing hymns to Christ,|| and Ammianus Marcellinus, another heathen writer, records the custom

\* St. August. Serm. 226 de Tempore.

† S. Luc. XXIV. 53.

‡ Suidas in Vit. Philo. Euseb. Lib. II. c. 17.

§ In Philopatre.

|| Lib. X. c. 97.

of the Christians passing the night in their churches. The offices of prime, tierce, sext, nones, vespers, and matins, are spoken of in the apostolic constitutions, and by St. Dionysius, the Areopagite.\* Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, describes the early congregation of the faithful before light, and expressly mentions the celebration of the third, sixth, ninth, and vesper hours. Origen in his third book on Job, alludes to their matins and vespers, and Clemens Alexandrinus in the ninth of the *Stromata*, commemorates tierce, sext, and nones, as does also St. Cyprian in his book "*De Oratione Dominica*." St. Zeno, in his first sermon to the Neophytes praises "the sweet vigils of the bright night," and Cæcilius with Minutius Felix, calumniates the nocturnal congregation of the Christians, calling them, "*latebrosos et lucifugaces*." In the same age, St. Hippolytus the Martyr, in a discourse on the end of the world, says, that one effect of the coming of antichrist will be the abolition of the psalmody and sacred rites of the Church. When St. Basil was detained in prison, some clerks and deacons gave money to the guards that they might gain entrance, in order to sing with him during the night the divine offices. This is related by John, the Priest, of Nicomedia. In the fourth century there are abundant testimonies, in Eusebius Cæsariensis, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzen. From these it appears that the psalm "*Deus, Deus meus*," and also that "*Benedicite omnia opera*," were then sung at matutinal lauds. The duty and happiness of this early thanksgiving are feelingly enforced by these great saints, who describe the solemn beauty of the nocturnal chorus. Palladius, speaking of the mountain of Nitria, on which five thousand monks lived in the time of the great St. Anthony, says, "At the ninth hour, you might hear in each monastery the hymns and psalms sung to Christ, with prayers and lauds, so that you might suppose yourself passed into a paradise of joy."† St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom, explain the particular object of each hour's devotion. At the rising of the sun, it was to return thanks to God; at tierce, to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost at this hour; at sext, the fastening of Christ to the cross; at nones, his giving up the ghost; at the setting of the sun to thank God for the mercies of the past day: and then they enumerate the nocturnal vigils and matutinal lauds at the first crowing of the cock. St. Augustin, in numerous places, mentions the same offices, as does also Cassian in his description of the ecclesiastical and monastic life. Peter Chrysologus, Synesius, Victor Uticensis, and St. Cæsarius of Arles, are equally clear in describing the nocturnal vigils, and the daily offices; and holy men in dying used to instruct youths, in the manner of observing them.‡ Nilus the Monk, relates that the holy fathers in Sina were killed by the barbarians at break of day, at the end of their matutinal hymns. In the sixth century, the most holy Benedict furnishes in his Rule an evidence of the fervor with which

\* Cardinal Bona, de divina Psalmodia cap. I. §4.

Hist. Lauriaca. cap. 7.

† Metaph. Duty apud Surium. 12 Septembre.



men studied the praise of God ; and in the following age, his disciple Gregory the Great closes the evidence produced by Cardinal Bona, in the history of the divine psalmody. Then followed Isidore of Spain, Alcuin of England, Amalarius Fortunatus, Rabanus Maurus, Walfridus Strabo, Rupertus Abbas, Hugo de St. Victor, and others, who cultivated the exercise of the divine offices with the greatest fervor. Thus we discern the gross error of Polidorus Virgil, who supposes the institution of the sacred hours to have arisen in the time of Pelagius II., whereas Cardinal Bona has fully shown that they commenced with the infant Church. Palladius declares that he beheld a state in which there were more monasteries than profane houses, that the divine praises were sung in every spot, and that the whole city seemed to be one church.\* In Bythinia arose monasteries *ἀκοιμήτων*, in which the divine praises were unceasingly sung night and day. Nicephorus relates that one of these was built in Constantinople, in which an association of monks, divided into three choirs, maintained an unceasing psalmody. St. Columban, at Luxeuil, instituted a similar monastery, and St. Gregory of Tours mentions another at Agen. The same rule was observed in the abbey of St. Denis, and in that of Tours, and in many houses of the Cistercian order. The minds of men ever rested upon that divine verse, “*Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine ; in sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te.*” Of the clergy of Paris, in the time of St. Germain, Fortunatus says,—

“*Carminibus Divinis divina poemata pangens  
Cursibus assiduus dulces revolvit opus.*”

The Cistercian monks always celebrated lauds at break of day, and, therefore, in the winter season, after singing nocturns, they always returned to their cell to spend the interval in study or prayer until the first break of light ; but in the summer they sung lauds immediately after matins.† St. Ambrose furnishes evidence that in his time, people of all sorts came to matins on Sunday, men and women, youth and old people, only one or two remained at home to guard the house.‡ The sacred Scriptures every where record that just men in all ages observed the break of day to devote it to religion. “*Dominus visitat hominem diluculo :*” and he sends his prophets rising early.§ Job, the mirror of justice, rising up early offered sacrifice for himself and his sons,|| whom he charges to rise up early to God. The holy David meditates the secrets of God in the morning watch, and early in the morning offers praise to God. The just are then all united in sacrifice and prayer, and as Hugo Victorinus says, “*There is nothing which Satan so much fears as the unity of charity.*” The morning is symbolical of piety. The ancient Etruscans offered honey to Aurora, which we consecrate with the sweetness of devotion. The poets represented Aurora as mounted upon Pe-

\* See *Hist. Lauriaca.*

† S. Ambros. *Serm. 34. de Tempore.*

‡ Card. Bona, *de divina Psalmodia*, 142.

§ *Eccles. xxxix. 6.*

|| *Job. vii. 18.*

gasus, because the soul is then light to fly upon the wings of contemplation. Some thought it was called Aurora, from the golden color of the sky. Taking occasion from this emblem, the writers of the middle age observe, that we ought to shine in the morning with the gold of charity, and that as the poet Nævius speaks of blushing Aurora, so should the modest color represent the grace of chaste purity in our souls. Homer calls the morning divine, because it brings us light, which is the symbol of the divinity. Therefore with the rising light, the children of divine light emulating the holy angels, who are called the morning stars, sing praises to the Author of light, and shine to him with joy.\* St. Ambrose says, that even the example of the birds should admonish men to praise their Creator at the rise of morning, and to begin the day with the solemnity of psalms.† Celebrated, say the fathers, is the statue of Memnon, described by Philostratus and Callistratus, which of its own accord when first illumined by the golden rays of morning, used to emit a sweet and ravishing sound, an emblem which might remind men to adore the majesty of their Creator, at the rising of the sun. Durantus Tholosanus says, that the hour of tierce used to be called the golden hour. In the canonical law, it is styled sacred, because it is at this hour that the sacred mass is celebrated with solemnity on days of high festival, as the ancient custom of the Church has ordained in order to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost.

On the various parts of the divine offices let us now briefly dwell.

Photius says, that a hymn is so called, “quasi ὑπόμνησις,” that is, a commemoration of something past. Eusebius speaks at length on the hymns which the Christians used to sing in the very infancy of the Church. The proses, or sequences, in which we trace the first beginning of the rhyme which distinguishes the modern from the ancient classic poetry,‡ are said to have been invented by Notker, a monk of St. Gall, in the year 880, whose version of the Psalms in German is still extant; but this monk affirms that he had seen the first model of them in a missal of the abbey of Jumièges, which was burned by the Normans in the middle of that century. The celebrated sequence, “Veni, Sancte Spiritus,” is attributed to Hermann, or to Pope Innocent III. That of Dies Iræ is ascribed to Thomas Celanus, of the order of St. Francis, in the thirteenth century. Of the same order was Jacoponus, who in the fourteenth, composed the Stabat Mater. Peter of Compostella is supposed to have been the author of the Salve Regina and the Alma Redemptoris. The universal adoption of the Roman Breviary, which is acknowledged to have been the slow and successive product of time, experience, piety, and the study of the Scriptures, was one of the happy effects, resulting in the middle ages, from the power of the Holy See, aided by the zeal of the nations, and the desire of devout kings. “We should do all things that the Lord has

\* Card. Bona, de divina Psalmod. 145.

† Exam. Lib. IV. c. 1.

‡ Pasquier Recherche de la France, Lib. VII.

ordained with order," says St. Clemens, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. "He has wished that we should render him certain duties at certain hours; he has also determined certain places and certain persons, where and by whom his worship should be celebrated: he has assigned to the sovereign pontiff his functions, to priests the place where they should offer the sacrifice, and to the Levites all the detail of their ministry." It was not, however, possible, in the first ages, to prevent the introduction of some diversity of customs in the celebration of the Divine offices; but this was finally obviated by the express and positive enactment of the Church. "Conformity and unity in the things which relate to the glory of God, must always be preserved in the Catholic Church," says the Bull of Clement VIII., "being founded under one head, Christ our Lord, and subject to his vicar on earth. Especially must that uniformity be maintained for ever in the prayers, and by adhering to what is contained in the Roman Breviary, that in the Church diffused throughout the whole world, God may be always praised and invoked by the faithful of Christ, in one and the same order of prayers and song."\* Walafriid Strabo, who lived under Louis-le-Debonnaire, attests, that "in almost all the Churches of the Latins, the customs, ritual, and liturgy of Rome prevailed, on account of the privilege of the Roman See, and the wisdom of its practices." He wrote thus at a period long before the Church had made a law to enforce this uniformity; which proves the Catholic tendency which, in all times and in all things, obliges every Church to gravitate towards Rome.

Any departure, however slight, or capable of defence, from the general practice of the Church, was felt as an injury by holy men. St. Bernard supplied an instance, on his first arrival at Paraclet, which he reached as they were sounding the bell for vespers. He went, therefore, straight into the church; but he was shocked on hearing the superior, when repeating aloud the paternoster, use the word *panem superstantialem*, instead of *quotidianum*. This sounded ill in his ears as a novelty. When he came to speak to Heloisa respecting it, she proceeded indeed, with the utmost modesty and grace, to prove, by Greek and Hebrew, by Scripture and the Fathers, that this was the proper reading. Abeillard too, hearing of what had passed, wrote a learned letter to St. Bernard, in which he shows that St. Matthew, who gives the whole prayer, and who had heard it from Jesus Christ, uses this word; whereas St. Luke only gives a part of it, and he had only heard it from St. Paul. Moreover he showed that the Greek Church follows in this point St. Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, in preference to St. Luke, though he wrote in Greek. Notwithstanding these arguments, St. Bernard adhered to his first opinion, that it would have been better to have followed the common universal usage of the Church.

Charlemagne lent his assistance to carry into effect the great object of the ecclesiastical rulers, to maintain one universal liturgy among the nations of Chris-

\* Bullarium, Clemens VIII. Bulla, Cum in Ecclesia.



tendom:—"Ut non esset dispar ordo psallendi, quibus erat compar ardor credendi:"—that those who were united by the sacred reading of one holy law, might be united also in the venerable tradition of intonation; and that the different celebrations of offices might not separate those whom the pious devotion of one faith had joined together.\* When therefore Spain, in the eleventh century, abandoned its Mozarabic ritual to embrace that of Rome, that grand system of universality, which gave such an inspiring authority to the ritual of the Catholic Church, received its full and final development. So early indeed as in the ninth century, Walafrid Strabo regarded this work as nearly terminated, and he demonstrated its advantages and indispensable necessity by the same arguments as those used by theologians of modern times.† The Council of Trent, in its twenty-fifth session, referred to the care of the Roman Pontiff the great work of the correction and definitive publication of the Breviary and Missal. Thanks to this master-piece of religious wisdom, the Catholic was a stranger in no land. Wherever he travelled, he heard the children of the Church sing the same holy chants of Rome—the mother and mistress of Christians—and the sublime tones which rose around the cross of the desert, were the same as filled the domes of the metropolis of the Christian world.

It need hardly be remarked, that although the final adoption of a uniform course of psalmody and reading was the gradual work of time, the more awful mysteries which involved the divine fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, were in all ages, and throughout the whole world, substantially the same. The word Missa, or Mass, though, like the term Trinity, not in Scripture, is of great antiquity, and, at least in the fourth century, it was used to designate the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, as appears from St. Ambrose‡ and St. Augustin.§

The Greek word *λειτουργέω*, which is derived from a word signifying public, is never used by St. Luke excepting in the sense of sacrifice, as is proved from his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In the classic poets it is used to express any public function;|| and in Scripture it nowhere signifies prayer. The function, or ministry, which by this term the Apostles are said to have discharged, was therefore that of the eucharistic sacrifice.

The canon of the mass has received indeed some alterations since the times of the Apostles; for in the year 440, the great St. Leo added four words to it; and about the year 590, Pope St. Gregory, some few others; but nothing was changed without the greatest precautions. Thus, not one saint is named who was not dead a long time before the year 400; after which, nothing almost was added. The Apostles are named in an order different from the present, which dates from the time of St. Jerome, who named them as they are now generally placed, which is another remarkable evidence of the antiquity of the ritual. Indeed, the small-

\* Caroli Magni contra Synod. Græcor. de Imaginab. Lib. I. † De Rebus Ecclesiastic. c. 25.

‡ In Epist. ad Marcellin. Soror. § Sermon. XCI. de Tempore. || Æschyl. Eumenid. 363.

est ceremonies pertaining to it may be traced to the most remote period, as in the instance recorded by St. Jerome, who says that, "in all the churches throughout the East, when the gospel is read, there are lights burning, though the sun may shine at the time."\* We know that, in the second century, in the time of St. Avaristus, it was the custom to keep holy water even in private houses; in which, during the first ages, were practised all those devotional exercises of Christian worship, which had connection with art and symbolism:† and in short, as a late writer observes, "we can trace, through every part of the office, some doctrine or observance of the primitive times, and may admire the watchful fidelity with which tradition has handed down every little ceremony connected with the first ages of our faith."

Leaving, therefore, the historical question, let us proceed to consider the ecclesiastical offices in relation to our threefold faculty of perception, as constituted for estimating beauty, justice, and truth—the development of which, certain philosophers of late have attempted to express by the term *æsthetics*; perhaps, indeed, without having sufficiently examined whether the particular combination of ideas really existed, for which they sought to discover a scientific word.

Ere we advance, however, it will be well to examine whether there be any ground of justice in the accusation so commonly brought against the middle ages, as expressed by Milton, who affirms, that "during their course the far greater part of men deemed in outward rites and specious forms religion satisfied, and that works of faith were rarely found." A sentence evidently expressing the conviction of many whom we still behold entering our churches, and with gloom beholding the rites that sanctify the pile, darting at the altar and the vested priest looks of such suspicion, that one might conclude they were imbued with the opinion of Cecilius the philosopher, mentioned by Minutius Felix, who says that the Christians in their assemblies lick the blood of a slain child covered with flour, and distribute its limbs. For the present it will be sufficient to hear the unpremeditated testimony of the men accused: for if their adversaries refuse such evidence and continue to ascribe opinions to them which they disowned with every expression of abhorrence, ignorance will be no cloak to malice.

Lewis of Granada, then, that eloquent Spanish friar, expressly says, that "all the sacred ceremonies, and other external works of virtue, which are not the least part of Christian perfection, are commended chiefly on this account, that they greatly assist us to attain to internal beauty and elegance of mind—that is, to a fuller knowledge of the Divinity, to hope, to love, to fear, and veneration of the Divine Majesty."‡ Ceremony is derived from the ancient word *cerus*, signifying holy, which also gave rise to the Latin term for men of an exalted station, as if the primal wisdom discernible in the formation of languages, had chosen in this man-

\* *Advers. Vigilant.*

† *Rheinwald die Kirchliche Archæologie*, 395.

‡ *Ludovic. Granatensis de Omnibus Sanctis, Concio II.*

ner to indicate that superior sanctity ought to be their characteristic. "In no name of religion," says St. Augustin, "can men be collected, unless the bond of certain signs, as if of visible sacraments, should unite them together :"\* from which Duns Scotus would infer, that even under the law of nature there must have been ceremonies divinely instituted ;† for though they are nothing in themselves, they are yet acts of exterior religion, by which the mind is excited to the veneration of holy things, and elevated to heavenly objects ; and by them piety is nourished, charity enkindled, faith increased, the worship of God adorned, and religion maintained. The simple are thus instructed, and the true faithful kept distinct from false Christians.—Christ himself hardly ever performed a miracle without using some ceremony, as when he made damp clay, and stretched out his hand to touch, and wrote upon the ground. The body should pay its homage as well as the soul. "Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum."‡ Under the three elements of religion, we find doctrinal learning rather than knowledge, the religion of the heart, as a thing of customary expression, and the symbolic religion of worship ; which last remains the peculiarly positive religious object, and as Fries observes, "the most important in the formation of the popular life ; for certainly positive religion is the most living and powerful master and instructor of the people, their perception and emotions arising from the view of the world constituting their deepest and strongest idea."§

But the clergy were most careful, as Cardinal Bona shows, to teach the people that piety did not consist in any exterior observances, though these were wisely and holily ordained by the Fathers.|| The Catholic Church abhors that superstitious belief in the theurgical power of ceremonies, and in their meriting an eternal recompense, which some late writers ascribe to her ; but she knew, as the author of *Theologia Germanica* says, that "by means of these rites and institutions many men are enticed, and converted to truth, who otherwise could not be corrected ; and indeed, that few men come to truth who did not first receive these institutions and rites, and exercise themselves in them, while they know nothing else. Therefore laws, precepts, institutions, and rites, in submissive spirituality or in spiritual poverty, are never despised or condemned, any more than the men who use them, who otherwise would become more inordinate, and worse than dogs or other brutes."¶

The extraordinary, and to many, unaccountable stupidity of the peasants, in countries from which the ceremonies of faith have been withdrawn, is only the natural consequence of their having been deprived of the religious worship, and the exercises of prayer and meditation connected with it. It is religion acting through this medium which civilizes and spiritualizes men. These poor creatures grow up without any idea excepting what is suggested by mere natural and an-

\* *Cont. Faustum. Lib. XIX. c. 11.*

† *In Lib. IV. Sent. Dist. I. 9. 7.*

‡ *Psalm lxxxiii.*

§ *Religios Philosophie, 177.*

|| *De divina Psal. 499.*

¶ *Cap. 24.*



imal wants. "Experience teaches us," says La Hogue, "that by far the greatest portion of men can have no doctrine and precepts of manners, unless by means of the public worship of religion : so that whenever the sacred rites which used to be publicly and solemnly celebrated are intermitted or abolished, it follows of necessity, that the rustic multitude and the unlearned people should relapse into the most foul barbarism, and into the most snpine ignorance of the duties of nature and of society." \* What some men call Apostolic simplicity, is more acutely noted down by others as Calvinistical folly. In our age, that Protestant simplicity of which some writers speak in admiration, is only a philosophic term for getting rid of God without forfeiting appearances ; far more designed for excluding his image from appearing intellectually in the detail of life, than for banishing it in form and symbol from those cold temples in which no hallowed flame ascends, and where sanctity at one entrance is quite shut out. The heart of man knows of no such simplicity. If it loves God, it must love to refer all things to him, and to worship him with all the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth. The sophists who now babble most in praise of simplicity in public worship, are men who seem to think it a great thing if they profess a mere belief in the existence of a God as a sublime abstraction : and as for those who admire it on religious grounds, if they were to study the work of Cardinal Bona on the Discernment of Spirits, methinks they would find other matter for their thoughts besides the danger to which Catholics are exposed of mistaking the operations of nature or of Satan for those of grace.† In fact, as theologians observe, "External is the natural and necessary appendix to internal worship ; for we are so constituted by nature, that all the sentiments of our soul break forth to the exterior, and become painted in the demeanor of the whole body ; insomuch, that it is scarcely possible to love God sincerely with all the heart, and not break forth in his praise, and manifest the intimate sense of divine charity by external signs. Why do men love ceremony in religion ? It is because they wish to enjoy life in all the faculties and divisions of their nature. To live is to be happy : and the highest life is that which is spiritual or divine. Therefore we desire that in that life all our preceptions should participate, and consequently we wish that our senses, as well as our reason, should be excited by a divine object. Even the disposition of body in relation to things external, resulting from a habit of devotion, instead of being a scandal to a profound thinker, may only remind him of what Malebranche says, "that every thing which passes mechanically within us, is worthy of the wisdom of our Maker."‡ Besides, man being constituted of a body and a soul, it is just that the body, with its various abilities, which are so many gifts of God, should come forward on the side of religion.—Further, it is the nature of man to need external assistance to enable him to rise

\* *Tractatus de Religione*, cap. II. prop. 2.

† *De Discretione Spirituum*, cap. 12.

‡ *Recherche de la Verité*, Lib. V.

to the meditation of divine things: therefore internal piety requires to be excited and nourished by ceremonies, and certain sensible signs. Moreover every man ought to be religious and pious, not only so as to be conscious within himself that he worships God, but also that he should promote the piety and instruction of the men with whom he lives, and of those who are entrusted to his care; and this cannot be done unless we profess, by some external sign, the intimate sense of religion with which we are animated.\*

In the ceremonial and discipline of the Church, there was no part without its use. That which might seem the most trifling, had its proper object, and served, in some way or other, to promote habits of humility, order, patience, recollection, and religion, so as to build up the Catholic character. Hence, the Fathers of the Council of Trent pronounce an anathema against all who should say, that the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church may be despised or omitted, "ad libitum," by the priests, or may be changed by any pastor of the churches.† A most important and incalculably beneficial sentence—which delivers Catholic piety from being at the mercy of weak, ignorant, though perhaps well-meaning men, who, in proportion to their weakness and ignorance, are generally vain of being reformers or modifiers of ancient things.

These approved ceremonies of the church are called, by Hugo de St. Victor, Sacraments of Devotion. He divides them into three classes—the first consisting in things, such as the aspersion of water, the reception of ashes, the benediction of palms and tapers; the second in actions, as the sign of the cross, the exsufflations, the extension of hands, genuflexions; and the third in words, as the invocation of the blessed Trinity, and that of Deus in adjutorium—for words themselves are sometimes sacraments.‡

There would be no end of following theologians in remarking all the uses of these external rites to imprint the mysteries of our faith on the understanding. They show that, from the exorcisms and insufflations used in baptism, it was easier to understand than the unlearned would have found it from the Scriptures, that children are born under the yoke of the demon, and infected with original sin: that, in like manner, the ashes strewed on the heads of men at the beginning of Lent, teach them, in a most forcible manner, the vanity of all earthly things, and that, in holy week, the solemn ceremonies of Church recall and imprint a knowledge of the mysteries of human redemption. Certain it is that the Catholic ceremonies, besides answering these ends, conduce, in all ages, to the defence of the faith against innovators, as when St. Augustin drew an invincible argument from the use of exorcisms in baptism against the error of the Pelagians.§

We are told incessantly, with shouts of defiance, that the rites of the Catholic

\* De la Hogue Tractat de Religione, cap. 2. prop. 1.

† Sess. VII. Can. 13.

‡ Hugo de St. Victor, Eruditiones Theologicæ de Sacramentis, Lib. II. pars ix. 1.

§ De la Hogue de Sacramentis in Genere, cap. 7, prop. 2.

Church addressed themselves to the imagination ; as if, in the estimation of sound philosophy, it were an egregious offence to address the imagination, which is one of the powers of the soul, given to vivify and govern the interior man. But will not reason admit, that those persons ought chiefly to be protected who are chiefly in danger ? And who are so much exposed to the wiles of the ancient enemy as persons to whose minds the greatest variety of images are continually presenting themselves ? Who so liable to sundry distractions and temptations, against purity, against charity, against faith ? Who so likely to be terrified at the approach of death, and recalled to the world by images of flesh and blood, by the wretched phantoms of vanity and sin ? Assuredly it is a greater marvel to see a man of much imagination hold fast his faith, than to see it kept by one who is more under the control of unimpassioned and abstract reason.

As for the charge of captivating the understanding by means of ceremonies, the men who produce it should learn from Malebranche, that their senses are not so corrupted as they imagine, but that it is the more interior part of their soul, their liberty, which is corrupted ; that it is not their senses which deceive them, but that it is their will which deceives them by its rash judgments.\* If, however, the church had ordained her ceremonies with a sole view to gratify the imagination, there might be some grounds for censure, even in reference to the beauties of poetry and art: because, although, in every excitement to spiritual activity; there is indeed a kind of pleasure, still emotion, as such, is not beautiful; but these rites are addressed not alone to the imagination ; they are no less so to the affections and to the understanding of the instructed people. Can one suppose that no permanent moral change was wrought in the mind by the mere act of slowly and deliberately tracing the sign of the cross on the forehead, on the lips, and on the heart, when the gospel is announced in the divine mysteries ? Can one suppose that the man accustomed to this practice is as likely to blush at the cross in society, and to show vile submission to worldly respect, as another who knows of no such practice ? At the end of each lesson in the choral office, the reader turns to the altar saying, *Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis*, because, as holy writers say, even that work of reading cannot be without some fault, since, if he read well, the mind is tempted with elation, and if ill, confusion follows; therefore, he who reads, stands always in need of the mercy of God, lest a work, in itself good, should be either corrupted by pride or rendered ineffectual by false shame.† Can it be thought that to one instructed in this meaning, the mere ceremony does not incline him to humility, and warn him to beware how he hears as well as reads the divine word ? And what, after all, are the first impressions created by the whole ritual ? “Were I to enter one of their churches now,” says a writer of the last century, “it would be apt to put me in mind of what St. John tells us he saw once in a vision. ‘Another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer : and there was



given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hands.' These lighted altars naturally made me think of what the good old Simeon said of Christ, 'A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.' Similar are the sentiments expressed by the celebrated Lavater on finding himself in a Catholic church. "He doth not know thee, O Jesus Christ, who dishonoreth even thy shadow? I honor all things," continues this philosopher, "where I find the intention of honoring thee. I will love them because of thee. I will love them provided I find the least thing which makes me remember thee! What then do I behold here? What do I hear in this place? Does nothing under these majestic vaults speak to me of thee? This cross, this golden image, is it not made for thy honor? The censer which waves round the priest, the gloria sung in choirs, the peaceful light of the perpetual lamp, these lighted tapers, all is done for thee! Why is the Host elevated, if it be not to honor thee, O Jesus Christ, who art dead for love of us, because it is no more, and thou art it, the believing church bends the knee. It is in thy honor alone that these children, early instructed, make the sign of the cross, that their tongues sing thy praise, and that they strike their breasts thrice with their little hands. It is for the love of thee, O Jesus Christ, that one kisses the spot which bears thy adorable blood; for thee, the child who serves, sounds the little bell, and does all that he does. The riches collected from distant countries, the magnificence of chasubles, all that has relation to thee. Why are the walls and the high altar of marble clothed with verdant tapestry on the day of the blessed sacrament? For whom do they make a road of flowers? For whom are these banners embroidered? When the Ave Maria sounds, is it not for thee? Matins, vespers, prime, and nones, are they not consecrated to thee? These bells within a thousand towers, purchased with the gold of whole cities, do they not bear thy image cast in the very mould? Is it not for thee that they send forth their solemn tone? It is under thy protection, O Jesus Christ, that every man places himself who loves solitude, chastity, and poverty. Without thee, the orders of St. Benedict and of St. Bernard would not have been founded. The cloister, the tonsure, the breviary, and the chaplet, render testimony of thee. O delightful rapture, Jesus Christ, for thy disciple to trace the marks of thy finger where the eyes of the world see them not! O joy ineffable for souls devoted to thee, to behold in caves and on rocks in every crucifix placed upon hills and on the high ways, thy seal and that of thy love! Who will not rejoice in the honors of which thou art the object and the soul? Who will not shed tears in hearing the words, 'Jesus Christ be praised!' O the hypocrite who knoweth that name and answereth not with joy, amen. Who saith not with an intense transport, Jesus be blessed for eternity! for eternity!"\*

\* *Empfindungen eines Protestanten in einer Katholischen Kirche.*

Another famed objection to the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic church was grounded on the supposed discovery that certain forms of expression adopted in them had been used by the ancients in their false religions ; and this was proclaimed with a vociferation of exulting triumph by the very sophists who were themselves inclined to revive the spirit and doctrines of the heathen philosophy. Polydore Virgil seems to have been so pleased with what he had written on this point, that, although he had continued to profess himself a Catholic, as to human eye, he really became one in heart at his death, yet, he looked on with the greatest apparent indifference while England was separating herself from the communion of the faithful. These men, so proudly learned, became fools, losing by pride what they gained by curiosity. To the profound thinkers of the ages of faith, there would have been nothing novel or startling in the proposition itself. Tertullian had shown that the ceremonies of the heathens, which resembled those of the Catholic church, had been transferred from the divine law to the worship of superstition,\* and Gregory Nyssensis, and Theodoret had affirmed that even some may have been wisely borrowed from them by the holy Fathers, and employed to the worship of the true God.† The advantage of adopting and sanctifying some pagan customs, was stated acutely in the following words by the venerable Bede. “*Per tinaci Paganismo mutatione subventum est, quum rei in totum sublatio potius irritasset.*”

The conduct of the Church in adopting such ceremonies, was, in fact, only conformable to that of the Deity himself ; for in his first covenant with Abraham he established circumcision as a most solemn and religious rite, yet this was in use among the heathens as a religious rite long before the time of Abraham, as is proved by Michaelis. To use the types or figures of a future Messiah in the Christian Church, would no doubt have been deemed inconsistent and monstrous, but it was impossible to infer that there was no one law, no one ceremony in the Jewish ritual, that the Christian Church could adopt. You have borrowed your ceremonies from the pagans, said the modern heathen, but one might have thought that the answer immediately sent forth would have left Middleton without any disciple bold enough to repeat his calumny.‡ Granting all that he would have granted, where could he find a prohibition in the law of Christians, from sanctifying every thing by prayer ? While, on the other hand, with what victorious power might not the followers of Christian antiquity have advanced on their side, and proved that the very men who thus accused them were themselves guilty of having borrowed, not the ceremonies, which of themselves were nothing in the world, but the very spirit, sentiments, and language of the pagans ? For let us consider how stood the two divisions of men opposed under these banners ? The one were possessed of doctrines and manners perfectly unlike those of the ancient

\* De Præscript cap. 40.

† Greg. Nyss. in vita Thaumatis. Theodoret. Lib. VIII. de Cur. Græc Affect.

‡ A Polish Pagan, the fiction of a Protestant Heathen. London, 1743.

world, though it is true, some of the early sages in availing themselves of the great primitive traditions of the human race, had said many things that seemed to express the beauty and wisdom of the Catholic philosophy; but in the others no eye could discern any opposition to the spirit and habits of the heathen lore. We can pass from the classic authors of antiquity, and even from the profane poets, to their great writers, without observing any sudden transition or change. Their moralists rise no higher than the flight of Cicero or Seneca. Their views of human character differ in no respect from the representations given by Euripides, Plautus or Terence. We find in none of their writers those sentiments and features which were peculiar to the Gospel, which rendered it in the eyes of Pliny and Tacitus, an execrable superstition. Certainly their adamantine authors, as they styled each other, would have given no offence had they appealed to the judgment of the forum or the Areopagus.

But now dismissing these unworthy objections as fitting only in the men who cherish them, let us proceed to contemplate in quiet meditation the beauty and wisdom of the solemn offices which were observed within the holy precincts of the Catholic Church; and if Xenophon saith truly, that there is nothing among men so useful and so beautiful as order,\* well may admiration be awakened at the memory of them: planetlike in their movement, constant in their duration, universal in their observance, so that holy writers of the middle ages, like St. Columban, St. Boniface, and St. Gregory, of Tours, could apply no other epithet to them; but "that course divine,"—universal, I say, and like the great operations of nature, extended over every part of the earth, for by means of the monastic institutions, these celestial sounds were as familiar to the desert as to the city; they were heard in the solemn depth of forests, on the wildest mountain pass, and they were borne by howling winds, from rock to rock, along with the shriek of sea-birds over the ocean wave.

Nature herself seems to point out the distinction of hours. The Pythagoreans used to take morning walks alone in places of silence and repose, where were temples and groves, and other objects proper for acting upon the mind. They would not speak to any one until they had composed their minds rightly in solitude and contemplation; for they esteemed it a turbulent thing to go amongst the crowd immediately after rising from sleep. Therefore, they always observed this matutinal walk, especially in temples where they could be found, or if not, in such places as most nearly resembled them. In the evening they used to resume their walk, not alone, but two or three together, that they might repeat what they had learned in the day, and recall what they had done, and so exercise their memory.†

Chrysippus with Seneca says, that the Hours are sisters of the Graces; but elder in birth. Homer, in his hymns, calls the Hours wise, and Orpheus styled them

\* *Œconom.* cap. 8.

† Jamblich. *de Pythagoric. Vita*, cap. 21.



chaste, and beautiful, and innocent. These expressions in their application are unintelligible to one who has only in mind a mode of employing the hours, like that of the degenerate times described by Martial, which consists in devoting the first to salutations and compliments, the middle to litigation, to business of various kinds, or to entertainment, and the last to banqueting and repose;\* but in what justice do they seem founded to the Christian ear when remembrance suggests their employment by the Church and by Catholic men in ages of faith! Good men and holy night sometimes be dismayed at observing that they occasionally felt wearied internally even by the operation of the works of God, if they had not been accustomed to receive and remark with deep attention the counsels and encouragements of the Church, to whose offices we are in general far from sufficiently applying for a solution to difficulties in the study of philosophy. The love of variety, arising from a sense of our own infinity, which implies constant renovation, and development, is not a vain or criminal propensity, since it is part of our nature which God hath made; and the Holy Ghost foreseeing that the spectacle and course of the external world might occasionally prove wearisome to human minds, prompted the Church to add in grateful praise of the eternal Founder of things who ruleth night and day, those remarkable lines:

"Et temporum das tempora,  
Ut alleves fastidium."

St. Athanasius observes, that from the creation of the world until Christ, the day preceded the night as we read in Scripture; but from the coming of Christ, the night precedes the day; and thus we begin to celebrate the day solemnly from the vespers of the preceding day. This was typical to show how from light men were to decline to darkness, from God to errors and idolatry; but from the time that the sun of justice, Christ, rose upon us, we are brought out of darkness into the light of divine faith.† The monks of Mount Athos consider the day to begin from midnight, because it was then that the resurrection of our Lord took place; and in allusion to this the Church exclaims, "O vere beata nox quæ sola meruit scire tempus et horam, in qua Christus ab inferis resurrexit," as if even the very time itself were endowed with intelligence, and more than in poetic figure blessed. The holy Fathers are full of praises of the night generally. The night, say they, is innocent, though it is the time of committing crimes, for the mind ought to be accused, not the time. St. Jerome says, "it is good to meditate during the day, but nocturnal meditation is still better; for in the day various necessities interpose, and cares and occupations distract the mind, but the night is the time of peace and quietness, most favorable for prayer and watching."‡ Therefore, St. Chrysostom says, "the night is not made for us to pass the whole of it in sleeping and

\*Lib. IV. Epig. 8.

† Athan. in 99. Sac. Script. 54. Gen. i. 3.

‡ Ep. 36, De Observ. Vigilium, Tom. IV.

repose. Witness these workmen, these sailors, and merchants. The Church of God rises at midnight. Rise thou, also, and observe the choir of the stars, the profound silence, the great quiet, which of itself can charm the passions of a troubled heart. Be amazed at the wonderful dispensation of thy God. Then the mind is purer, lighter, more subtle. This darkness and silence are enough to inspire it with compunction; but if you behold the heavens studded, as it were, with innumerable eyes, you will take delight in admiring the wisdom of the Creator. God is moved by nocturnal prayers, if you make the time of repose that of penitence.”\*

Speaking of the constant prayer and psalmody of the perfect Christian, Clemens Alexandrinus adds, “ἀλλὰ καὶ νύκτωρ εὐχαὶ πάλιν.” “The day,” says Tertullian, “dies in the night, and is buried in darkness. The honor of the world is shrouded, and all substance is enveloped in blackness. All things are silent and amazed. Every where are justice and rest. Thus nature mourns for the departed light.”† St. Chrysostom, who had not foreseen what we now behold, in enumerating the beneficent works of God, takes especial notice of the merciful ordination of night to oblige men to suspend their labors who might otherwise be induced by avarice to deprive themselves of necessary repose. It is night, when the woods and the wild seas rest. “Behold,” he exclaims, “what tranquillity, what profound silence. Every thing in nature is hushed, every thing is in repose, even beasts and monsters possess quiet in sleep’s calm bliss: there is an end also of complaint, and of those groans which proceed from the miseries of human life. The night is like a favorable port in which all men forget the storms with which they were agitated during the day.”‡ There is an end of the combats of ambition. The friendly night, as Æschylus sings, wide over heaven’s star-spangled fields, holdeth her awful reign,§ and even the intemperate passions of the heroic world professed submission to its sway.

νύξ δ’ ἥδη τελέθει· ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πινέσθαι.||

“Fatigued by the labors of the day, is it not,” asks St. Cyrill of Alexandria, “through favor of the night that we recover the vigor which we had lost? What is more favorable than the night to promote our advance in wisdom? It is the time of those holy thoughts which raise our souls towards the Author of all good; it is then that we can devote ourselves more freely to reading and to the meditations of the divine oracles. Is it not during the night that we find in our soul a greater ardor for prayer, and in our voice more religious sounds to chant the sacred canticles? At what time does the remembrance of our sins present itself to us with the greatest force? Is it not during the night?”

In the last book we remarked how familiar were men with death, and here we

\* Hom. 26, in Act. Apost.

† On Compunction, Lib. II. cap. 5.

‡ Tertull. de Resur. Carnis, cap. 12.

§ Agamem.

|| Hom. II. VII. 28.

see in their language abounding in solemn invocations, how they sympathized also with black night, the mother, not of the furies, but of peaceful and holy thoughts. "It seems to me," says Clemens of Alexandria, "that the night was called 'ἐνφρόνη,' because at the time the soul is at rest from the senses, and partakes more of wisdom. On that account the mysteries are chiefly celebrated at night, and they signify the separation of the soul from the body."\* Eustathius writing on the Iliad, cites the ancient proverb which ascribes counsel to the night, to which Æschylus seems to subscribe, saying, that during the day mortals are blind.† In the arrangement of the ecclesiastical office these considerations have not been overlooked, for in the office of the night we may observe, that the lessons read are longer than those read in the day; because, as Cardinal Bona says, the night is for contemplation, the day for action.‡ It appears from Tertullian, Athenagoras, Arnobius, Justin, and Minutius Felix, that the Christians were calumniated by the heathens on account of their nocturnal psalmody and vigils. They were called a people loving darkness, and addicted to impious rites. The Christians might, indeed, have referred them to their own poets, who speak of the sacred night,§ to Orpheus, who celebrated the night in noble hymns, to Cicero, who praises the nightly vigil consecrated to the gods,|| to Plato, who recommends the employing part of the night in transacting public business, and the affairs of domestic economy, for the reason that much sleep is injurious to the concerns of both body and soul.¶ But the examples of the Old Testament supplied them with a sufficient authority, for there they read that Abraham rose up by night with his son to ascend the mountain and obey the voice of God; that it was by night when Jacob desired to see the mysterious ladder, and struggling with the angel till morning, received a benediction; that by night the Lord led the children of Israel out of Egypt; that Samuel the prophet prayed all night to the Lord; that Judith went out by night and prayed; that the royal David rose at midnight to confess to the Lord, and invited others to lift up their hands by night and to bless the Lord.

"The devotion of vigils," says Nicetius, "has always been known to the saints. Isaia cried, 'De nocte vigilat spiritus meus ad te, Deus.' David says, 'memor fui nocte nominis tui, Domine.' Anna, the widow, departed not from the temple day and night, the holy shepherds too were keeping watch when they beheld the vision of angels in the sky; and the Saviour himself repeatedly reminds us of the need of watching by night, and taught us by his example, and admonished Peter in the time of the passion, 'non potuistis una hora vigilare mecum? Vigilate et orate;' words sufficient to awaken men from the sleep of death. The blessed apostles kept vigils. St. Peter in prison, and the disciples who were assembled in the house of Mary, and Paul, and Silas. As for the utility of vigils, I must now speak," con-

\* Stromat. Lib. IV. c. 22.

§ Eurip. Ion. 85.

† Eumenid. 105.

|| De Legibus, Lib. II.

‡ De div. Psal.

¶ Ib. Lib. VII.



tinues this holy bishop, "although this can be more easily felt by the exercise than described by the words of a narrator; for it is by tasting that we see how sweet is the Lord. A good thing, indeed, is meditation by day; a good thing is prayer; but much more grateful and efficacious is nocturnal meditation; because in the day various necessities disturb us, occupation deadens the mind, multiplied cares distract the sense; but the night is secret; the night is quiet and opportune for prayer, and fitting those that watch; know, therefore, that vigils are agreeable to God."\* "The hour of midnight," says St. Basil, "the hour of repose and silence, is the most favorable to the pure operations of the soul. The sight and the hearing receive then no impression from external things, the soul is then alone; it is disengaged from all earthly things; it is wholly occupied with God. During these precious moments of the night, the memory of sins presents itself most forcibly to her."† It is then that she discerns the rapid flight of life; while every thing else is at rest, the strides of death are more distinctly heard. The whole world seems abbreviated before her, as it did to St. Benedict in the night, and she may almost behold herself already entering upon the eternal world. Ah, well may the night seem solemn!

These views may appear ungrounded and paradoxical to the present race of men; for alas! who now is permitted to taste the sanctified night of Christians, or even the Ambrosian night of Homer? Dead both to grace and nature, if men do not, like some of the ancients, devote the night to the rites of Bacchus, ‡ it is made the time of all others in which, as if they studied purposely to contradict all that the holy Fathers have ever written, they least think of wisdom or of God, and thus the gloom of moral darkness is added to the obscurity of nature. To Adam after his fall, the natural night seemed full of horrors:

---

"With black air  
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,  
Which to his evil conscience represented  
All things with double terror."

But during the middle ages, the night continued to appear as it did to the primitive Christians. "The night time is often favorable to devotion," says Thomas à Kempis, "and of no small assistance to sacred meditations."§ If we reflect on the observation of Quintilian, who remarked that when sleep was intermitted, thought was assisted by the very darkness of the night,|| we shall have reason to expect that the people of the middle ages who so loved vigils, would be found upon investigation to have been eminently that thinking people, which the moderns are so fond of being considered. "The nights are dearer and more useful to me than the days," says the Abbot Peter, of St. Remi, in a letter to Berneredus, Abbot of St.

\* Nicetius Episcop. de Vigiliis Servorum Dei. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. III.

† Nicetius Episcop. de Vigiliis Servorum Dei. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. III.

‡ Oppian de Venat. Lib. I. 25.

§ Sermonum III. II.

|| Lib. X. 6.

Crispin. "My occupations by day hurry me away violently and fraudulently from myself, but the winter nights, by their length, confer on me a double benefit; for they give rest to my body, and they renew my spirits. They give liberty to revisit celestial things, and to inquire into their secrets, and also to be remindful of my friends."\* Lucas, Archbishop of Cosenza, in the thirteenth century, used also to pass the night in writing, "yet," says the writer of his life, who lived with him, "to the conventual vigils in the Church he would always hasten, humbly singing and watching with the brethren."† Cardinal Bona observes, that the heavy and continued sleep of worldly people is as much opposed to health of body as to philosophy, according to the judgment of Aristotle,‡ of Hippocrates,§ and of Avicenna. Then in alluding to the nocturnal vigils, he exclaims, "O si scirent homines quam sanctæ, quam gratæ Deo, quam salutare ecclesiastici, sed et fideles singuli, simul in unum dives et pauper, noctem verterent in diem nocturnis precibus summa studio insistentes."|| St. Bernard shows how the night is peculiarly favorable for prayer. "When sleep involves the world in profound silence, then," saith he, "prayer will be purer and freer. How securely does it then ascend to God, the sole arbiter, and to the holy angel who is ready to present it on the supernal altar! How grateful is such prayer! How serene! and uninterrupted by any sound! How clear from all dust of terrene solicitude; exempt from all praise or flattery of mortal beholders! 'O insignem nocturni temporis prærogativam! O sacras noctes omni luce splendiores!'"¶ Not now devoted to Thessalian arts, but conscious of angelic light:

"O nox purpureo splendidior die,  
O nox delitiis omnibus affluens."\*\*\*

The heretics, beginning with Vigilantius, whom St. Jerome, on that account, calls the sleeper, condemned the nocturnal vigils and psalmody. Polidore Virgil, generally a rash and vain writer, affirms that they were always held in suspicion on account of the danger of immorality; but such an error, says Cardinal Bona, does not deserve to be confuted. In the third century, under Marcellus, it was, indeed, forbidden to keep vigils in the cemeteries, in those low regions where sad night hangs around the drowsy vaults, and where moist vapors steep the dull brows of those whose limbs are laid to rest, but no where is it written that the vigils in churches were condemned by the ancients.

St. Philip Neri was even accustomed to pass the night frequently in the cemetery of St. Callistus on the Appian way.†† St. Romuald had such a horror of sleep after vigils, that if any one confessed to him that he had indulged in it he would not allow him that day to celebrate mass.‡‡ Crodegand, Bishop of Metz,

\* Petri Cellens. Epist. Lib. V. l.

† Italia Sacra, Tom. IX. 206.

‡ In Œconomicis.

§ 2 Aph. 3

|| De divina Psalmodia, 122.

¶ Serm. ult. in Cant.

\*\* Card. Bona, p. 128.

†† P. Aringhi Roma Subterranea, p. 239.

‡‡ Petr. Damian in Vit. S. Romualdi.

forbids the canons on pain of excommunication to sleep during the interval between nocturns and the early sacrifice, unless on account of sickness or with leave. The holy Abbot Ælredus, calls that a blessed interval which intervenes after the nocturnal psalmody, until the rising of the sun ; for then he says, the heart is most refreshed with the sweetness of devotion. It is at this hour that celestial visions have been generally imparted to holy men. The rocks and woods of Alvernia were still involved in the solemn grey which precedes the first rosy streaks on the eastern sky, when the winged seraph in living flames descended upon Francis, giving the last signets to his saintly flesh by the fervor which it kindled.—Gilbertus, praising the same interval, exclaims,—“Deus bone ! hora illa noctis quàm sine nocte est, quàm nox illa illuminatio in deliciis ! Orationes illæ privatim fiunt, sed privata non petunt.” Thus St. Anthony, after passing the night in prayer, when the sun rose in the morning, used to say, that it came to interrupt his peaceful ecstasy. St. Benedict used to pass the night in the upper chamber of a tower which rose above the monastery ; and it was there, when all the other brethren were taking rest, that the holy man, while standing at a window on the south side, looking towards Capua, had that vision of the whole world, abbreviated amidst a sudden splendor which exceeded the light of the brightest day.\* Pope St. Leo, when at Rome, used three times every week to walk by night barefooted from the Lateran Palace to St. Peter’s Church, privately, attended by two or three clerks, praying and chanting psalms.† When St. Odo was a monk at St. Martins’ of Tours, he used in the night to go alone to pray at the sepulchre of the saint, which was at a distance of two miles from the college, and the wolves used to terrify him as he walked thither.‡ St. Gregory of Tours relates, that Trojanus, Bishop of Saintes, used to go, in the darkness of the night, to visit all the holy places which were within the circuit of that city, and attended only by one subdeacon.§ Thus Neemias rose up by night, and a few men with him, and indicated to no one what God had put into his heart that he should do in Jerusalem. Thus did he go out by the gate of the valley by night, and before the fountain of the dragon, and thus did he contemplate the walls of Jerusalem broken down, and its gates consumed with fire. “For,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “it is the duty of spiritual doctors to rise up often by night, and while other men sleep, to go about investigating the state of the Church, that they may discover how they may correct and raise up the things which have been defiled by sins, and overthrown by the tempests of war.”||

These nightly exercises of devotion were practised also by the laity with great assiduity, during the middle ages. One of the most remarkable confraternities of the Church of Paris, was that bearing the date of the year 1205, and entitled “Confraternitas Beatæ Mariæ Parisiensis surgentium ad Matutinas,” which was

\* *Chronica Casinensis*, S. B. cap. 35. † *Chron. S. Monast. Casinensis*, Lib. II. 87.

‡ *Bibliothec. Cluniac.* § *De Gloria Confessorum*, 59. || *Allegor. in Lib. VIII. II.*



composed of pious persons of the city, who used to rise and repair to the church at midnight.\* It is mentioned in the life of Madame de Maisons,† that she used to rise constantly at that hour, and repair to the church of St. Eustache, her parish, when they chanted matins.

This night of the middle ages must be dear to poets. O how solemn sounds the choral song while the nocturnal wind sweeps round the solitary pile! Angels then may be thought to beat their wings against the windows of the churches; and sometimes has death seemed to beckon with its finger through them, to give salutary warning to a summoned soul.

The ecclesiastical decrees desired that all the people should come to nocturnal vigils.‡ It was, in fact, the practice of the laity, in the middle ages, as in primitive times, to spend the vigils of festivals in the churches, and Drexelius laments its disuse in the wretched times in which he wrote. "Alas!" saith he, "what a progress! We indeed keep many nocturnal vigils; but it is over cups, amidst dancing, and playing at tables."§ Mabillon, in his *Itinerary of Germany*, describes certain lanterns at the great gates of the church of the monastery of Luxen, and at that of Bonvaux near Chartres, to guide persons who came in the night to those churches.|| "I remember," says an ancient monk, "that during eight days before the festival of St. Paulinus the Briton, Bishop of Capua, who died in 851, the bells used to sound at vespers, and that, on the vigil of the feast, lights used to burn on the top of the tower."¶

Sometimes persons kept vigils in churches throughout the whole night, without any lights burning.\*\* The pious Emperor Henry, as often as he visited Rome, used to spend the first night in the Basilica of St. Maria Majora.†† Drexelius also mentions the devotion of Mary de Cœnies, who, with one attendant, used every year, and in the depth of winter, to remain during a whole night in the church of our Lady. Thus too, on the festival of the blessed martyr of the Brivatensian church, St. Gregory of Tours has occasion to relate, that a devout poor man came there to celebrate it, who having fastened his horse outside, entered the church, and there spent the night motionless, praying with the other people during the whole night, till break of day.‡‡ We read in the decrees of Ives de Chartres, that when a bishop was to hold his synod in a church, "all the persons were to be ejected at the first hour of the day, before the rising of the sun."§§

To this discipline there was a remarkable exception in the sacred cave or church in the rocks of Mount Garganum, celebrated throughout the whole world on account of the apparition of St. Michael. For, from the first light till evening

\* Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocese de Paris*, Tom. I. 1.

† In 4to. 1657.

‡ Ivonis Carnot. *Decret. Pars vi.* c. 259.

§ De Jejuniis, Lib. II. cap. 6.

|| *Iter Germanicum in Vet. Analecta.*

¶ *Italia Sacra*, Tom. VI. 313.

\*\* S. Greg. Turon. *Miracul. Lib. I.* 5.

†† Jo. Naucl. *Gen.* 34.

‡‡ S. Greg. Turon. *Miracul. Lib. II.* 21.

§§ *Decret. Pars. iv.* 246.

psalmody, sacred mysteries, and prayers were offered there daily by clergy and people, during which time the doors were never closed; but through fear and reverence for the angelic choir, which was said to be present there during the night, no one was permitted to remain after the last office, when diligent search used to be made in order to expel all persons. In the year 1015, St. Henry the Emperor was received there to hospitality by Ursus, Archbishop of Siponto, when he came for the sake of devotion to visit this church of St. Michael. Passing the brazen gates, which were the gift of princes, and descending into that vast cavern obscure, distilling drops through the solid rock, he joined in the offices which were then solemnly sung before the great altar at the end of the choir, in which is a fountain of most sweet and transparent water. When the office was concluded, and every person commanded to withdraw, the saint indeed begged, and obtained permission, to remain in the church during that night; but this was an especial indulgence, which no one else ever enjoyed: and the subsequent lameness of the holy emperor was attributed, by contemporary writers, to the effects of the vision which was then vouchsafed to him, when like another Jacob, he endured an angel's touch.\*

The processions of penitents at Rheims, in the year 1575, took place in the night. The Archbishop, Louis de Guise, assisted, walking barefoot along with a numerous confraternity. The litanies, sung with a mournful tone, were often interrupted by the sobs and plaintive cries of the penitents, which produced a most overpowering effect in the silence and horror of the darkness. These pilgrims anticipated, from the aspect of public affairs, the destruction of the Catholic religion in France, and hence their penitential vigil.† The night's dead silence did well become such sweet complaining sorrow.

It is still a devotion at Rome to go by night to the ancient Basilicas without the walls. One morning, leaving Rome while it was still dark, being three hours before sunrise, as I approached the gate of St. Lorenzo, I saw an extraordinary light moving towards me, which soon assumed the form of crosses of light. Presently I heard the murmur of prayers, and the solemn chant of the pilgrim's litany; a vast crowd of persons became half discernible, the men going first and the women following, and the light proceeded from two crosses borne along, to which lamps were attached. It is impossible to describe the awful impression produced by such a spectacle at that hour, and on such ground! At first I supposed it to be a funeral train, but on inquiry I was told that they were persons returning to Rome, after hearing mass in the basilica of St. Lorenzo, without the wall. It struck me forcibly that here was a faith and thirst worthy of the days of the apostles. The first Christians could not have evinced greater fervor than these poor people, who filled the lonely precincts of the eternal city, at the bitter hour of damp exhalations, with prayers for mercy, with the praises of Christ, and

\* Italia Sacra, Tom. VII. 821

† Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, Lib. IV. 147.

of his blessed mother. At Lucca, there is a holy brotherhood whose members are appointed in turn to sound a bell before dawn, at the doors of such of the citizens as are accustomed to assist at the first mass, in order to apprise them of the hour, and light the torch which is to guide them to the Church. In the monastery of St. Apollonia, at Florence, there is a part granted to a confraternity of pious people, who assembled there only during the night. Through the foul womb of night the hum of hasty passengers, who murmur prayers as they repair to churches, stillly sounds. "There is no rest," says St. Paulinus, "for the multitude who repair to the festival of the blessed Confessor Felix, at Nola."

———"Properant in lucem à nocte, diemque  
Expectare piget, votis avidis mora noctis  
Rumpitur, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt."\*

Even without the interest of a more than ordinary occasion, the watchers who guard the city find them going about it, through the streets and squares, seeking Him whom their souls love. It was so common a practice to go to the church at matins, that the French had an ancient proverb,—“as dangerous as return from matins,”—to express the liability to fall into mischief in the dark from enemies or wolves.†—Petrarch writes as follows:—“I rise always at midnight, to sing the praises of God. The silence of the night is best suited to this employment. It is the part of my life when I am most myself, and most delightfully employed. It is a custom I have observed, which has never been interrupted but by sickness, and which I shall ever adhere to.” We find him dating one of his letters from “the most retired corner of the Ambrosian house at Milan,” under that light, and at the same hour, in which formerly the living Light arose upon the earth to enlighten men.—Nicholas Von der Flue, when father of a family at Saxeln, used to retire to rest with his household; but as soon as they were asleep, he would rise from his bed, leave his chamber, and spend in prayer to God all the remaining time till day break. His son, John, says of him, “my father used always to retire to rest with his children, but all night long, till morning, I have heard him pray in another room. The heavenly sweetness with which he used to be refreshed served him instead of sleep, so that in the morning, no one ever rose from bed so fresh and cheerful as he used from prayer.”‡ It is curious to remark, that while private devotion instigated men to this dedication of the tragic melancholy night, the very laws of the state lent their assistance to secure it from profanation. By the French laws, all laborers were forbidden to work after vespers. Carpenters alone were permitted to work during the night, when coffins were to be made for the dead, or works for funeral ceremonies erected. It was not even lawful for tradesmen to sell goods till the ap-

\* Italia Sacra, VI.

† Pasquier Recherche de la France, Lib. VIII. 23.

‡ Leben und Geschichte des Nikol von Flüe, by Weissenbach.



pointed hour had struck, which was generally tierce or nine.\* The Roman laws prohibited judgments from being passed, at night, notwithstanding that Minerva had been made to sanction the contrary discipline of her own favored tribunal.†

To the night of the middle ages belonged many solemn and poetic things, of which the trace only remains, as in some towns of England, where, at particular seasons of the year, during the night, one hears a small bell tolled a certain number of times, and then, in a mournful tone, some rude verses chanted, which had been substituted, no doubt, for the ancient invitation to pray for the dead at that hour, a devotion to which indulgences were attached. In Italy during the octave at all souls, the bell for the dead tolls the whole night long, or at least for a considerable space about midnight. In the history of the church of Durham, we read, the "three bells of the lantern were rung ever at midnight, at twelve of the clock; for the monks went evermore to mattins at that hour of the night."‡ On arriving in Italy the traveller is soon reminded of the beautiful similitude which Dante draws from the tones that sanctify a Catholic night.

"As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God  
To win her Bridegroom's love at matin's hour,  
Each part of other fitly drawn and urg'd,  
Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet  
Affection springs in well-disposed breast."§

O, how does a youthful imagination then sympathize with all that the holy fathers have written respecting the night! how does it love that holy silence which reigns on all nature! The river has still its silver flood, but no more its murmur; the highways are desert, the cabins, voice-less; no leaf trembles under the vaults of the wood, and the sea itself, expiring on the strand, scarcely rolls against it a plaintive wave.|| How far is every thing here from the frown of sable-vested night, the consort of chaos! How holy is the Catholic night, the night of the middle ages! the time in which saints, all over the earth, are assembled to chant the same sacred hymns, and to commemorate the same great deliverance. Some seasons, indeed, there were, as those of Christmas and Easter, in which it was in an especial degree the privileged and blessed time; nights in which things celestial were joined to earthly, and divine to human; in qua terrenis cœlestia, humanis divina junguntur; for as the church of God says, it was, "while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, that the Almighty word came from heaven, from the royal throne. Seven times in the year, mass used to be said at midnight. At Christmas, in consequence of the ordinance of Pope St. Telesphorus, in the second century, on Holy Saturday, on the festival of St. John the Baptist, and on the collation of holy orders, on the four Saturdays of the Ember weeks."¶ For a long time after St. Leo, ordinations used to

\* Monteil Hist. des Français, Tom. III. 261. † Æschylus Eumenid. 692. ‡ I. 35.

§ Parad. X. || De la Martine. ¶ Benedict XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, II Append. 388.

take place on the Saturday night of XII. lessons, towards Sunday morning, after the second nocturn of matins, as appears from an ancient Roman order which was in the abbey of Vendome.\*

But while the Church of God is thus risen at the solemn midnight hour, where sit the world's children? Alas! for them, the night has no terrors, excepting when there is a question of going to the assemblies of the faithful: worshippers of pleasure—children of night, pursuers of private sins, as hot on the scent, as if like their elder sisters, sung by Æschylus, they were divinely deputed to follow the trace of blood that cried to heaven; who are in constant habits of braving the obscure air at the hour when rest is provided for all flesh, are immediately convinced that they would contract some fatal illness if the way were to the church instead of the festal hall. They might, it is said, meet revellers in the streets, and religion might incur disgrace if her temples were to be open at those hours, which the moderns, by common consent, think must needs be consigned over either to sleep or to Babylonian rites. To them we may address the words of St. Clemens Alexandrinus to the Pagans, who were initiated in the orgies of Bacchus, or, as he says, “in the mysteries of the Atheists,” “formerly the silent night was to virtuous men a veil of sweetness, but now, to you, the sacred night is filled with the noise of dissolute speech.”† If compelled to absent themselves on such occasions from the assemblies of the faithful, men were not heard in the middle ages to declaim against this devout and most ancient exercise, or to condemn as imprudent those who maintained its utility, as if almost it were an evil as great as heresy, to love the poetical side of a religious life. “Because you are infirm,” said Nicetius the bishop, “do not condemn the vigils of others. It would be foolish and sufficiently foreign from religion to depreciate those who run well, because we are unable ourselves to run; though we have not the power, we ought not to envy but to congratulate those who have; for as he who consents to malice is a partaker of the punishment, so, a participation in glory may be hoped for from a consent to goodness.”‡

But now the approach of rosy-fingered morn is witnessed in the eastern sky, and the melody of choirs is resumed to hail the hour of universal lauds to the eternal Founder of things, who ruleth day and night. Dominus regnavit, now is heard, and the rest which follows of that psalm in which, says Hugo de St. Victor, “Christ, with admirable brevity is multifariously praised.”§ The Church seems to come forth refreshed and more than ever joyous. She descends to speak of all the various duties of men, and sings the dawn with transport; for then the army of errors deserts the hurtful way; the sailor collects his forces; straits and seas grow calm; at the crowing of the cock, hope returns; health is imparted to the infirm; the robber's sword is sheathed; faith is restored to the fallen; Jesus

\* Chardon Hist. des Sacramens, Tom. V. c. 6.

† De vigiliis servorum Dei. Dacher. Spicileg. III.

‡ Clem. Alex. Protrepticus, c. 2.

§ De Officiis Ecclesiasticis, cap. 10.

she invokes that he would look upon the wavering, for, at his look, sins would cease and crime be washed away with weeping ; that he would enlighten the senses, and dispel the sleep of minds. At the rising of the star of light,—she prays to be protected from all hurtful things during that day,—that the tongue may be tempered so as to serve no horrid contention, that the sight may be directed so as to draw no vanity, that the heart's recesses may be pure and the pride of the flesh humbled : so that when the day shall depart, her children may be enabled, through abstinence, to sing glory to the coequal and eternal Three.

After the offices of lauds and prime succeeded the sacred mass, though in times of persecution, when the assemblies of the faithful were necessarily less frequent, the Eucharistic sacrifice was not daily offered. In the great church of Constantinople, down to the XIth century, mass used to be celebrated only on Sundays and Sabbath days and festivals, which was a vestige of the ancient necessity. Whereas, in all churches of less antiquity, the divine mysteries were daily celebrated according to pious usage,\* sanctioned by the constitutions termed apostolical.† Mass used to be said daily in the time of St. Ambrose and St. Basil, after the example of the apostles ; a usage which is acknowledged to have existed in the first ages, even by Protestant writers.‡ St. Cyprien shows that mass should be said daily, and that all should communicate daily. To the like effect speaks St. Hilary. With the Greeks, they who passed three Sundays without communion were said to be excommunicated.§ From the sixth century, the daily celebration of mass was a common discipline, but it appears that in the seventh it became still more general for pious men to assist every day at mass. St. Goar celebrated mass every day, and the same is recorded of St. Geremarus, Abbot ; and Bede affirms the same of Ceolfrid, the abbot of his monastery. The bishop, Licinus, is also related to have daily sung mass with great compunction of heart, but Mabillon interprets the word to mean only having simply recited it.

In the eighth century, this discipline was enjoined by the decrees of the synods,|| and since the Council of Trent, it continued to be the universal practice of devout Christians. “When you have risen from your bed,” says Louis of Blois, “after making the sign of the cross and recommending your soul and body to the Most High, hasten to the church as to the place of your refuge and a garden of spiritual delights.”¶ Hence we may remark, that on occasions of public danger or calamity, there was no necessity, as we read in the Pagan times of Rome, for the state to appoint a day of general prayer, for which a form of words was to be prepared, for the church had already her appointed course, and there was always a sacrifice ready and a sublime invocation for those who sought to propitiate the mercy of Heaven. What the venerable Bede said of priests, who, without a le-

\* Thomassinus de veteri et nova Ecclesiæ disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. c. 72.

† Const. Apost. II. 59. VIII. 35—39. ‡ Rheinwald Die Kirchliche Archæologie, p. 332.

§ Walafrid Strabo de rebus ecclesiasticis, cap. 20. || Mabill. Præfat la II Sæcul. Bened

¶ Guide Spirit. cap. 2.



gitimate hindrance, fail to present the divine host to God every day, may well account for the zeal of holy men to offer up mass daily. "Tell me," cries the bishop Iona, in his "Institute of Laics," "tell me, you who come to the church only on feast days, are not the other days also feast days? Are they not days of the Lord, for on what day does not the church celebrate the victory of some martyr or confessor?"\* Pope Benedict XIV. considers the arguments of those who maintain that mass should not be daily celebrated, on the plea that "*semper abundantia contumeliosa in se est*," and that, "*quicquid raro fit, pretiosius fit, cum fit*," and that the priest who seldom celebrates is usually moved to tears, which he would not be if he daily offered. Having refuted these objections, he concludes thus:—"In this last objection there lies an ambiguity, for, as St. Antoninus says, 'If any one should estimate that disposition in himself, from the sensible compunction of heart, profusion of tears, fervor of mind, and similar sentiments, so that when he feels these, he believes himself to be disposed, and when he does not feel them, he supposes himself indisposed, he walks very uncautiously, and is most often deceived. Frequently those who have no such things are in a state of grace, and they who have them are altogether without grace, though they do what is gracious.'"

Admirable was the diligence evinced by the church to enable the faithful people to perform their devotions without interruption to their social duties. Within the churches the divine mysteries were successively celebrated from the break of day till noon, to suit the early traveller, the laborer, the domestic, the student, the charitable matron, the pious father of a family. We have seen that in almost every street there was a church or chapel, that no time might be lost in passing from the study, or the workshop, or the palace. The number of altars in churches was partly designed for this object. In the church of the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem, built by Constantine, there were three altars, but when visited by the bishop Arculfus, in the seventh century, it contained five altars. There were four in the Basilica of St. Mary, in the Vale of Josaphat. In the sixth century, it appears from St. Gregory of Tours,† there were two altars in the basilica of St. Peter at Bourdeaux. St. Ambrose also mentions many altars being in one church.‡ In the new church of the monastery of Cluny, which was dedicated in the year 1131, there were twenty-four altars. The altar of St. Gabriel, the Archangel, was in the tower of the bells; that of St. Michael, the Archangel, was over the portal. The ancient chronicles of Strasbourg attest that there were formerly in that cathedral fifty altars. In some churches a mass used to be said expressly for servants.§ Portable altars were in use long before the eleventh century. St. Wilfram, bishop of Sens, passing the sea in a ship, is said to have celebrated the sacred mysteries upon a por-

\* Ionæ Aurelianensis Episcop. de Institutione Laicali, Lib. I. cap. 2. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

† De Gloria Mart. 34.

‡ Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. Lib. II. tit. vii. § 1.

§ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, chap. Corbell.

table altar. Bede\* relates that the two Ewaldes offered sacrifice daily, having with them vessels and the table of an altar dedicated. Hinemar prescribed that no one should celebrate mass upon an altar which was not consecrated. All this discipline prevailed at least as early as in the fifth century.

The Eucharistic sacrifice terminated, the church resumed her holy songs, and celebrated tierce and sext, after which followed an interval of repose while the day reigned in its fulness. But nothing is constant with men. Every thing revolves and perishes. "Alas," exclaims Bona, "we proposed to perform great things when the sun was mounted to the meridian, and lo ! in a short time, it descends to evening. The church is about to sing nones. "It is the ninth hour in which Christ died for man, in which man had been expelled from paradise ; † the day is become old, the night is approaching ; such is the frailty of this mortal life. How soon the day declines, the heat cools, the light sinks and is buried in the shade of evening, but we must run our course until we shall behold the Lord of lords in Sion." Nones having been sung, the church prepares to celebrate a more august office.

It is the vesper hour. "Ah, what a symbol is here," cries Bona. "Let us say, therefore, with the disciples, whose hearts burned within them by the way, 'Mane nobiscum, Domine, mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit.' Now evening, the mother of night, will bring forth darkness ; now sadness oppresses us, and despair sinks us down. The waters have come, even unto our soul : now a horrible tempest afflicts our spirits : the cold of iniquity freezes us, and a wounded conscience dreads the terrible sentence of the Judge. Remain with us, O most clement Lord, since without thee we can do nothing ; we are nothing ! Thou art our consolation, thou art our refuge and strength ; thou art a tower of might against the face of our enemies. The night of wickedness covers all things ; the light of truth faileth ; depravity abounds ; charity grows cold ; our eyes are turned to thee, that we may not perish. Remain with us, that the darkness may not come down upon us and that the shining light, which shineth to us in that dark place, may not be extinguished in the night. The end of life is near ; the evening of our day : deliver us from the power of darkness, and turn not in anger from thy servants ; because if thou art with us, we shall fear no evil in the midst of the shadow of death, but with the brightness of thy grace we shall be enlightened in that region of the dead. It is good to be with thee, O sweet Jesus. Remain with us, and turn not away from us. These are the shades of evening ; the darkest night draws on, in which no man can work. Remain with us, and close the door upon us, until the darkness shall pass over, and light again rise to visit us."‡

O, who can appreciate the charm of these short, pathetic, affectionate addresses from the altar, after vespers, when so many a youth is grateful to the darkness for concealing his falling tears !

\* Lib. V. cap. 11.

† Durandus Rationale, Lib. V. 8.

‡ Card. Bona de Divina Psalmod. ccxxii.

It is the vesper hour, when the poor soul thirsts and hungers more intensely, inasmuch as the trials of the day have worn her down. It is now that she seeks the silence of ancient groves, and the peaceful walks of moss-grown battlements. The very poet of the secular society is not insensible to its influence :—

“ Sweet hour of twilight !—in the solitude  
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore  
Which bounds Ravenna’s immemorial wood,  
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow’d o’er  
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood.  
Ever-green forest ! which Boccaccio’s lore  
And Dryden’s lay made haunted ground to me ;  
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee !”

Pythagoras prescribed that in the evening, before the hour of rest, after the perturbations of the day and the tumult of action, the mind, which is then moved like a flood, should be appeased and composed by the sound of gentle music.\* We read of our Divine Lord, that having dismissed the crowd, he ascended a mountain alone to pray ; and when it was evening, he was there alone.† In the heart of cities, and even wherever the towers of a feudal castle cast their broad shadow over the open lands, there was always, during the middle ages, a sacred portal, sure to be open to receive the pilgrim at the evening hour, to a temple, in which he might compose his turbid thoughts by holy meditations, joined with those Hypodorian strains, which soothe the imagination and tranquillize the heart.

Vespers were always celebrated with more solemnity than any other of the lesser hours. St. Benedict prescribes that they should be fully and sweetly sung.

But now begins night, with her sullen wings, to double-shade the desert.—

“ Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,  
While night’s black agents to their prey do rouse.”

Fowls in their clay nests are couched, and wild beasts come forth, the woods to roam. Five, six, seven—the clock has ceased, and now we shall hear the toll of the cloister bell for the benediction. Complins may represent the end of life, as it is the last office of the day ;—for, as Pindar says, “ Men are but of one day, and the shadows of a dream.” How delightful that calling to memory of the complin hymn, when Dante marked, from among the spirits that sat apart in limbo,

“ One risen from its seat, which with its hand  
Audience implor’d. Both palms it join’d and rais’d,  
Fixing its steadfast gaze towards the East—  
‘ Te lucis ante,’ so devoutly then  
Came from its lips, and in so soft a strain,  
That all my sense in ravishment was lost,  
And the rest after, softly and devout

\* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita. cap. 15.

† Matt. xiv. 23.



Follow'd through all the hymn, with upward gaze,  
Directed to the bright supernal wheels,"\*

Complin sung, silence was observed till after mass the following morning. This was prescribed by St. Benedict ; and we find the observance recommended by all the great spiritual writers of the middle age.† Now succeeded the solemn matin bell, tolling at the hour of nature's silence and repose, which seems like a suspension of this mortal life ! "O awful sound !" cries Bona. "One's course then seems finished. Then we may say with the holy Columban, 'O tu vita quantos decepisti ! quæ dum fugis, nihil es ; dum videris, umbra es : quæ quotidie fugis, et quotidie venis, veniendo fugis, quæ fugiendo venis : dissimilis luxu, similis fluxu. Te ostendis tanquam veram, te reducis quasi fallacem. Ergo nihil es, O mortalis vita, nisi viæ imago, fugitiva ut avis, ut nubes incerta, fragilis ut umbra.' "‡

### CHAPTER III.



THE divisions of the sacred hours marked, let us proceed to observe the general character belonging to all these offices of grace : for there is much in them intelligential and abstruse, that deserves deep attention, much to excite a reasonable and pious curiosity, and somewhat, perhaps, to explain and defend, in consideration of the ignorance and wants of an age which has endeavored to render every thing perspicuous but what relates to heaven, and which toils unceasingly to make vain provision for the gratification of every thirst but that of justice.

To have seen the importance of an uniform liturgy, one must have felt the necessity for its being unchangeable, and that for the reason assigned by St. Augustin : "Lex orandi, lex credendi ;" for the prayers which the Church uses in the administration of her holy rites, are so many proofs of the respective doctrines on which they depend ; and these prayers could only be preserved from alteration through a long series of ages, by retaining the ancient language in which they were originally composed.§

Stephen Pasquier has well said, "Il ne faut rien eschanger de ce que une longue

\* Purg. VIII.

† D'Avila, Epist. LXVII.

‡ S. Columban. Homil. de Fallacia Vitæ Humanæ.

§ Vide Digressio Historic. II. in Chron. S. Monast. Casinens. cap. 32.

ancienneté a approuvé en une religion ; voire jusques aux paroles mesmes.”\* Divine Providence had caused the language of Rome to become, in a certain sense, universal, in order to facilitate the extension of the Gospel and the maintenance of ecclesiastical unity, as in earlier ages he had preserved the Semitic language in a state of immobility, in order, as Walton supposes, to render more easy the migrations and external relations of the patriarchs ; or, as the Count de Robiano suggests, to preserve more unchangeable, clear, and certain, the reading of the sacred text.†

The Germans, Franks, Poles, and all northern nations, when converted to the faith, received the liturgy in the Latin tongue. The Moravians, indeed, form an exception, to whom, in 867, Adrian II. gave permission to have mass celebrated in the Slavonic, but he himself recalled this faculty, which was again given to them by his successor, and again recalled in the eleventh century by Alexander II. The only answer that the Duke of Bohemia could obtain on this head from Gregory VII. who had a deep conviction of the necessity of the ancient discipline, was this—“*Scias nos huic petitioni tuæ nequaquam satisfacere posse.*” In fact, had this most important law of discipline been abrogated, a wide field would have been opened to innovators in matters of faith—for the living languages, in consequence of the natural disposition of men to be esteemed great and distinguished, are liable to constant mutations—and therefore, it would have been necessary to translate the liturgy as often as languages changed. There would be as many versions as tongues and dialects ; so that there would be no end of making liturgies, and the doctrines of faith, at the mercy of human vanity, could no longer be preserved, as in a sacred asylum, under the faithful key of the ancient language.

Besides this we must remark that, in the ages of faith, men were not children in philosophy : they had drawn for themselves the proper inference from the fact remarked by Clemens Alexandrinus, when speaking of “the first and generative languages, which,” saith he, “are barbarous, but supplied with names from nature ;” he observes, “and men confess that prayers delivered in a barbarous—that is, in a tongue different from their own—are more impressive ; *καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι δυνατωτέρας εἶναι τὰς βαρβάρῳ φωνῇ λεγόμενας.*”† Certainly there was no reason why theologians, in reference to the use of things divine, should not possess the same advantages as was proved to be so conducive to the good of poets with the Greeks and Latins, who had a distinct language by which they could convey the most familiar things in terms intelligible to all, and yet wholly different from those under which they might be associated with vulgar or unworthy ideas, from being in common use. This usage did not contradict the maxim, that it was the simple and ignorant who were capable of the highest prayer ; for, as St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura distinguished the three modes of attention

\* Recherches de la France, Lib. VIII. 12.

† Etudes sur l'Ecriture de l'Egypte.

‡ Stromat. Lib. I. c. 21.

to the divine offices, the first consisting in the material pronunciation of the words—the second in their literal sense—the third in their mystic sense, which is God : the first, which relates to the words, belonging not to the simpler sort, who are ignorant of Latin ; the second, which relates to the sense, regarding theologians and learned men ; the third, which relates to the affections, belonging to monks and men of devout life, although they may be void of letters : it follows that incompetency with regard to the first which is called the material, and even a less degree of knowledge respecting the second, which is termed the formal, diminishes not the perfection of those who possess the third, which is the final attention, constituting the piety of the religious and the poor.\* Pure prayer, as Hugo of St. Victor defines it, is when the mind, from the abundance of devotion, is so inflamed with love, that when it supplicates God, it forgets the precise object of its desire.†

Unction, again, no less incommunicable than authority, is the distinctive character of the prayers of the Catholic Church. This impressive quality can be felt ; it can never be defined. It is the ravishing expression of a filial confidence ; it is the work of the spirit of love, which prays in the Church by ineffable groans. It is the result of order and peace ; it is the echo of a soul, of which all the faculties are held in accordance by obedience. The words of the Roman liturgy, besides that they are the expression of the vows of the Church, which is holy, are also the words of saints, of men capable of finishing the hymn begun by angels. These texts chosen in Scripture to edify piety, have been selected by humble, and innocent, and fervid souls, accustomed to find in them the sweetest nourishment. These mysterious words, which they have given us from their own fund, breathe still the faith and the candor of past ages. In general, the deeper we search, the more we shall be convinced that there is a profound reason for every institution of the ecclesiastical order. True, the Church offices, in the solemn antiquity and symbolism of their language, may have presented difficulties ; but these are greatly exaggerated by the moderns. They were such as might easily be overcome where desire was felt ; and of them we may say, in the words of St. Augustin, speaking of the many and multiplex obscurities in the holy Scriptures—that all this was purposely provided in order to subdue pride by labor, and to prevent the understanding from becoming fastidious, which generally contracts a contempt for things of easy investigation : for, as Pellico justly observes, “*Éxquisite sentiments, whether of art or of morals, are only acquired by a diligent will, and by assiduous efforts.*”†

Men babble now of the necessity of having prayer composed in language more refined ; but as De Maistre remarks, “the beauty of prayer has nothing in common with that of expression, for prayer is like the mysterious daughter of the great

\* S. Thom. 2. 2. 9. 85. art. 13. S. Bonav. Lib. VII. de Process. Relig. c. 3.

† De Modo Orandi Libellus, cap. 2.

‡ Dei Doveri Degli Uomini, cap. 12.



king, 'omnis gloria filiæ regis ab intus.' It is something without a name, but which is perfectly perceptible, and which mere talent alone can never imitate.' Perhaps one might affirm with justice, that a studied expression would distract and misdirect the attention; at least, there are many who might cite the words of the ancient critic in reference to the style of Cato and the Gracchi, and say in allusion to themselves, "veterem illum horrorem dicendi malim quam istam novam licentiam."\* But yet on the other hand, where shall we find, in the true sense of the term, grace of composition, if it be not discernible in the voice of the Church? What skills it to study harmony of words if here be not the soul stirring might of poesy?

———" Ah, that piece of song,  
That old and antique song, methought it did relieve my  
Heart much more than light airs, and recollected terms  
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times."

That frequent repetition of uniform syllables and the sound of these terrible finals in the ancient pieces, when sustained by the majestic gravity of the Gregorian chant, possessed a great empire over minds. Cicero remarks the grandeur of many monotonous finals in a verse, and adds, "Præclarum carmen! est enim et rebus et verbis et modis lugubre." The lines which he thus eulogizes might be passed on a modern reader for a monkish composition.

"Hæc omnia vidi inflammari,  
Priamo vi vitam evitari.  
Jovis aram sanguine turpari."†

Those archaisms too or antiquated forms of expression abounding in the Vulgate, which are elsewhere only met in writers anterior to the Augustin age, were rather a beauty than a defect in the divine offices. The introduction of words, also new to the Latin tongue, but required by the doctrines of faith, was another feature calculated to awaken noble and devout thoughts. Vivifico is a word not used by profane writers. St. Jerome was driven to the necessity of often adopting it, as the idea of giving or restoring life is so essentially Christian, that no heathen could have been found to express it. The classic authors would themselves defend this usage on principles of common sense, for as Cicero says, "logicians, physicians, geometers, musicians, and grammarians, speak after their own manner, and use peculiar words. Not even common workmen can retain their arts without using words unknown to us, but in use with themselves. 'Quo magis hoc philosopho faciendum est. Ars est enim philosophia vitæ; de qua disserens arripere verba de foro non potest.'"‡ Zeno himself was an inventor rather of new words than of new things. If this was permitted to Zeno, why not to St. Jerome? "Sunt enim rebus novis nova ponenda nomina," says Cicero,

\* Quinctill. Lib. VIII. 5.

† Tuscul. III. 5.

‡ De Finibus, Lib. III.

citing the examples of Epicurus himself, who called *προληψιν* what before him no one had ever named by that word.\* The celebrated lexicographer, Gesner, used to say, that he considered the Vulgate as a classical work, since it enabled him to survey the Latin language in its full extent. But even if no such titles were available, men should learn, as St. Augustin says, that "it is not the voice but the affection of mind which reaches to the ears of God. Therefore, they ought not be disposed to laugh if they should hear God invoked with barbarisms or solecisms, for though it is by a tone in the forum, it is by a vow in the Church that they are blessed. 'Itaque forensis illa nonnumquam forte bona dictio, numquam tamen benedictio dici potest.' Of the sacrament which they are about to receive, it is sufficient to the more prudent to hear the meaning, but with minds of slower apprehension, it is necessary to employ more words and similitudes, lest they should despise what they behold."

The high antiquity of the Roman offices may be seen also in these responses and anthems composed of words from the ancient Vulgate, whose religious and apostolic simplicity is long anterior to the age of St. Jerome, in that division of the Psalms traced by this great doctor at the desire of Pope St. Damasus, after the ancient usage which recalls the vigils of the first Christians,—in the mysterious, profound, and inimitable style of the collects, and other deprecatory formulæ, in those hymns composed by a great bishop in the Ambrosian Basilica to occupy a faithful people while besieged by a furious princess, in those hymns of Prudentius, Sedulius, Gregory, and Hilary, of an Innocent and a Thomas Aquinas. In truth, I should never finish were I to trace, in reference to antiquarian lore, all the grandeur and interest of the Roman Liturgy. Shall I speak of the sublime chants which have come down to us along with these admirable prayers? I might call to witness even Protestant authors in whose ears they have never sounded without causing to vibrate the Catholic chord. Who has not felt the charm of these sublime passages imprinted with the genius of ages that are no more, and that have left no other vestige behind them? Who has not shuddered at the simple plain chant of the office of the dead when the tender and the terrible are so admirably blended? What Christian has ever heard the paschal chant of "*Hæc dies*," without a sentiment of infinity, or the "*O filii et filiæ*," without feeling his heart inflamed with a more tender love for the children of men? Who has ever heard on the festivals of the Assumption and of All Saints, a whole people making the holy vaults resound with the inspired accents of the *Gaudeamus* without feeling himself carried back, through the lapse of ages, to the time when the echoes of subterraneous Rome repeated this triumphant chant, while the empire was hastening to its end, and the Church commencing its eternal destinies?†

But not only was Latin the language of the Church, symbolical too in the highest sense was the expression of her desires, so that in proposing her liturgy as an

\* De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I.

† Le Mémorial Catholique, I. 2.

object of literary and philosophic study, one might say each moment in the words of Dante,

“ Ye of intellect  
Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal'd  
Under close texture of the mystic strain.”\*

The origin of this whole discipline must be sought for in the very nature of things, for, as a German philosopher observes, “all thought communication of men upon religious truth must in its affirmative expression be figurative and exhibited in symbols.”† Angels behold spiritual things by means of divine illumination, but to mortal eyes they can only be presented through the medium of sensible symbols. The language of the Church in this respect meets us still in every department of the arts, where it is often not comprehended; for it was in conformity with it that painters and sculptors employed those lilies, pelicans, stags, and other objects of visible nature to signify spiritual and invisible things. The creature as well as Scripture being, as Hugo of St. Victor saith, the book of God to recall man to the true and immutable good.‡ How naturally and unavoidably the Church inclined to this usage will be obvious at once, if we bear in mind the practice of the Holy Scripture, and above all the example of our Lord, the fact of whose profound parables should put to silence the rash objectors who would blame the Church, without considering that the symbol is the same whether it consist in words or invisible objects. Who need be told that the judgment of the wise in all ages has sanctioned the use of symbols? Clemens Alexandrinus § relates that Hipparchus, the Pythagorean, was expelled from the school, because he had openly written down the precepts of the Master; and that they placed a column to him as to a person that was dead. The wise ancients saw the necessity of using allegory and figure in the expression of sublime truth. Gregory Nazianzen says, that the sacred mysteries are not to be explained before the base, according to the principle expressed by Sallust, the philosopher, that to hide truth in fables, prevents the foolish from despising, and compels the studious to philosophize,|| for which reason it was that the Egyptians placed sphynxes at the entrance of their temples.

But let us remark the difference between the figures of the ancient sanctuaries and those of the Catholic temple. In the former, the symbol which conveyed truth only to a few of the initiated, gave birth to the grossest idolatry with the rest of men; whereas the Church, on the contrary, commences with a verbal and authoritative promulgation, and only after that clothes the mysteries which it has announced in sensible forms as an earthly refraction of the heavenly light, accommodated to the necessities of her children. The Christian use of mystic words dates from the very cradle of the Church. “The use of symbolic language,” says Clemens Alexandrinus, “is most useful for many things; it is conducive to right

\* *Infer. c. 9.* † *Fries Religios Philosophie und Philosophischen Æsthetik.*

‡ *Institut. Monasticæ Sermo VIII.* § *Strom. Lib. V.* || *Lib. de Diis et Mundo, cap. 3.*



theology, to piety, to the exercise of understanding, to brevity of speech, and it is an argument of wisdom.\* He remarks that the style of the Old Greek as well as of the Hebrew philosophy was enigmatical, for that brevity of expression was studied as most useful and persuasive. He shows that the prophets made use of enigmas, and that the mysteries were not shown clearly to all men alike, but only after certain purifications and previous instructions. "In a word," he says, "all theologians, both barbarians and Greeks, concealed the principles of things, and delivered truth through enigmas and symbols, in allegories and metaphors, and such tropes. Nay, even the wise men of the Greeks conveyed their lessons in short words and apophthegms, such as *γνώθι σαυτὸν* and the like. The poets also teaching the theology of the prophets, philosophize by means of allegory, as did Orpheus, and Linus, Musæus, Homer, Hesiod, and other wise men of that class, more obscurely conveying truths in dreams and symbols, not through envy, but that by means of searching out the sense of the enigma, men might be more enticed to the discovery of truth. In the same manner," he remarks, "we are instructed in the Psalms and in the prophets, where the Lord opens his mouth in parables ;† and by the apostles who speak wisdom to the initiated, the wisdom of God in a mystery which the princes of this world knew not." "Sapientes abscondunt scientiam," says Solomon, in order that the mocker may seek wisdom and not find it ;‡ for the first essential qualification for understanding symbolic language is a revering spirit. All ancient wisdom certainly recognized the importance of symbolic instruction. The Pythagorean symbols were celebrated in the philosophy of the barbarians, such as "keep no swallows in your house," that is, have no talker or busy body, and smooth down your bed when you rise from it, that is, extirpate every vestige of passion. In fact, the symbolic mode of teaching by enigmas was characteristic of the whole Pythagoric institution.§ Idanthuras, the Scythian king, as Phercydes the Syrian relates, replied to Darius by a symbol instead of by words.|| Androcydes, the Pythagorean, describes the letters called Ephesian, as consisting of symbols and obscure expressions, as for instance, darkness is called *ἄσκιον*, from having no shadow and light *κατάσκιον*, since it involves a shadow ; *τετρας*, is the year, from its having four seasons, and *βέδν* was the air, as being *βιόδωρον*.¶ The stoics say that Zeno in order to prove the vocation of his disciples, wrote his first instructions in such an obscure manner that it was hard to understand them. In like manner, the writings of Aristotle were twofold, *τὰ ἐσωτερικὰ* for his initiated, and *τὰ ἐξωτερικὰ* for the vulgar without, and the former were unintelligible to common men.

What is mysticism ? what must be mystically viewed ? Religion, love, nature, and state. The Church offices were composed of symbols, and as an ascetic writer remarks, "nisi omnia referantur ad laudem Creatoris, inanis est omnis visio vi-

\* Stromat. V. S. 8. † Isa. lxx. 3. ‡ Parab. X. § Jamblich. 34. || Strom. V. 7. ¶ Id. V. 8

dentium.”\* “Every thing in the Church is full of divine signification and mystery,” says Durandus. “Every thing in it abounds in celestial sweets, when one knows how to look at it, when one knows how to draw the honey from the stone, and the oil from the hardest flint. Who can enable us to do this? Lord, the well is deep, and I have no vessel wherewith to draw the water! It is for the priests, the dispensers of the mysteries, to comprehend and reveal them to others.” To condemn the use of symbolic instruction as unworthy of an age of the highest intelligence, would indicate a total ignorance of the general law and construction of human minds, since whatever be the method of instruction adopted, the fact which Dante remarks is incontrovertible, that

—————“From things sensible alone ye learn  
That which, digested rightly, after turns  
To intellectual.”†

It should be observed, moreover, that the spirit of the middle ages was peculiarly favorable to this method, so that the symbols adopted in the ritual of the Church, must have then possessed extraordinary charms in the estimation of all ranks of society. No object or occasion seemed too trifling to furnish matter for the exercise of their disposition to view things in the light of symbols. Ives, of Chartres, receiving a comb as a present from his dear friend Gerard, in reply to him, interprets it as an emblem which can teach him the duties of his episcopal office.‡ The laity evince the same inclination: men that were not all tongue, but deeds and truth, would thus in the common intercourse of life, in dumb significants proclaim their thoughts, and, as Shakespeare witnesseth in the Temple garden, give, in the plucking of a red rose or a white, an answer to the summons of Plantagenet. Dom Claude de Vert, a learned Benedictine, in his work upon the ceremonies of the Church, offered a simple and natural explanation of most of them. Languet, Archbishop of Sens, published a reply, and assigned to them a wholly symbolical origin. Both of these views no doubt were just. As Duns Scotus remarks of the sacred Scriptures, the divine offices of the Catholic Church had a literal and a spiritual or mystic sense, which last, in threefold division, was either allegorical, tropological, or anagogical, referring either to what was to be believed, performed, or hoped, and sometimes one sign or word, like that of the cross, or the name Jerusalem comprised all—a literal sense, signifying an event or a city, a tropological, denoting trust and sanctity, an allegorical, denoting the Church militant, and an anagogical, signifying the triumphant Church.§ No one who loves to study the doctrine of perception, in reference to the beauties of poetry and art, can be insensible to the care evinced by the Church, to press into her service every thing which can bring unity into a visible form; and, indeed, the great charm and

\* Thom. à Kemp. Hortulus Rosarum.

† Ivonis Carnotens. Epist. VI.

‡ Parad. IV. 41.

§ Duns Scoti Miscellan. IX. 6.

might of poetry over human life, is never more fully felt than when it employs consecrated figures and symbols to express the mystery of our existence in the world of wishes, and the ideas of anticipation which console it. That the symbolic sense was intended in the ceremonies of faith, is proved from the ancient fathers. Thus St. Ambrose says to the Neophytes, who have been just initiated by baptism into the Christian mysteries, "Recollect what you have done, what you have seen. You have seen the Levite, you have seen the priest, you have seen the high-priest. Consider not the figure of bodies, but the grace of mysteries. You have spoken in the presence of angels, for he is an angel who announces the kingdom of Christ and eternal life. Esteem him not by the appearance, but by the gift. Consider the ancient mystery of the holy rites. Do not believe only your bodily eyes, for what is seen is temporal, but what is perceived only by the mind is eternal; and do not regard the merit of the persons, but the office of the priests. Believe that Jesus our Lord was present, by reason of devout prayer, and the celebration of his mysteries. In the washing of the feet recognize that the mystery itself consists in the ministration of humility; in the white robe, and the unction, and the cutting off of the hair, and in all the rites, observe how beautiful is the Church, and how she desires to arrive at the interior mystery, and to consecrate all the sense to Christ. You have seen the most holy altar composed, and the people approaching to it. Remember that the sacraments of the Church are more ancient than those of the synagogue, and more excellent than the manna; for there is the offering of a priest for ever, and that which you have received is the bread of the angels, the very body of Christ. For here there is no order of nature, where there is excellence of grace. You have seen, therefore, the mysteries of the Church, which is said to be an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain, to signify that the mystery ought to remain sealed with you, that it may not be broken by the deeds of an evil life, or divulged to improper persons, or disclosed to the perfidious by garrulous loquacity, but that it should be placed under the protection of faith, and of a holy life and silence."\*

St. Thomas says, that it is on account of the war which the ancient enemy always makes against those who are at prayer, that the Church directed by the Holy Ghost, begins all the canonical hours with "*Deus, in adjutorium meum intende,*" a custom of immemorial usage. At matins, this is preceded with the verse, "*Domine, labia mea aperies,*" because after complins the preceding evening the lips had been closed, and therefore in beginning the nocturnal office, this prayer was added, that God would vouchsafe to open the lips of his servant to praise his name.

Amalarius shows the origin of the antiphons and the doublechorus of the Church offices. The antiphon, which refers to love, is alternately sung by the two sides of the choir, because charity cannot exist where there are not at least two to respond. That charity, therefore, may be perfect, it was necessary that there should

\* *De iis que mysteriis initiantur, Lib.*



be one to whom the other might exhibit its affection. Therefore, the psalms are sung with alternate modulation to evince mutual love. In vain he prepares to sing the psalm who does not join to it the antiphon of love. On the more solemn festivals, the antiphon is double, to show that love ought then to be more perfect. In others, the beginning of the psalm is imperfectly announced, and at the end it is completed, because, as Hugo of St. Victor says, "Charity begun in this life is to be consummated in the end. The chanter alone begins the antiphon, which is then finished by all, because charity from one Christ is diffused into all the members. After the psalms all in common joy sing the antiphon, because common joy springs from common charity." On the use of the Allelujah, Hugo of St. Victor says, "Here neither words nor understanding suffice, and yet love will not admit of silence. Therefore, the Church by thus uttering sound—pneumatizing—indicates admirably, with more expression, and in a better manner without words, than it could by means of words, what is the joy of God where words shall cease. For by this sound, though we do not describe what it is to feel eternal joy, at least, we show that it is indescribable. And since the praises of eternal life will not resound in human words, the sequences are sometimes mystically sounded forth without words; for no signification of words is necessary where the hearts of all will be laid open to all beholding the book of life."\* The Rubrics prescribed that the number of the collects should be always uneven, for the Church desires unity and conjunction, which is expressed by an uneven number, which, as it cannot be cut into equal parts, preserves its integrity.† The credo is repeated in some of the offices, partly in secret, and partly aloud, to show, as Cardinal Bona says, that "Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem." St. Edmund, the Cistercian monk, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his *Mirror of the Church*, seemed to reprehend all prayers but the divine form taught by our Lord, which was in fact the universal prayer of the middle ages, as Dionysius the Carthusian observes.‡ But Cardinal Bona shows the necessity of attending to his real meaning, lest we should conclude that he actually did intend to condemn all other forms according to the heresy of Basil.§ Hugo of St. Victor, indeed, shows that the several petitions contained in this divine prayer, correspond to the graces which qualify men for beatitude, since their fulfilment would render men poor in spirit to hallow the name of God, meek, to inherit his kingdom, mourners, from the repentance attached to that knowledge produced by submission to his will, hungry and thirsty after justice, seeking from heaven their daily bread, merciful, from a consideration of their own trespasses, clean of heart, being freed from temptation to the vices which obscure the intelligence, and

\*Hugo de Sanct. Victor, *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ*, cap. 7.

† Bened. XV. de Sacrificio Missæ, I. 110.

‡ De Judic. Anim. XXXVIII.

§ Yet a late writer in the *Quarterly Review* accuses him of a superstitious fondness for formulæ of prayers!

children of peace, in consequence of being delivered from evil.\* The Church also uses a certain language of impassioned piety borrowed from the mystic Scriptures, which Richard of St. Victor thus proceeds to explain. "Reason and affection," saith he, "have both their hand-maidens, imagination and sensuality. So much is each necessary to its own mistress, that without them the whole world itself could confer nothing upon them, for without imagination reason would know nothing, and without sensuality, affection would taste nothing."† *Osculetur me osculo oris sui. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo. Favus distillans labia tua, mel et lac sub lingua tua.* "What, I pray," asks this devout contemplatist, "can be sweeter than these words? What can be more agreeable? What language would be heard more willingly, more greedily? These words seem to sound something carnal, and yet there are spiritual things, which are described by them. Thus Nephtalim knows how to mix carnal with spiritual things, and to describe incorporeal by bodily things; so that the twofold nature of man finds in his discourse whence he can admirably refresh himself, consisting as he does of a bodily and of an incorporeal nature. Hence it is that these things sound so sweet here to man."‡ But in order to understand this point more fully, let us again hear Richard. "After the human race," saith he, "had been expelled from joys of Paradise, entering on the journey of the present life, it had a blind heart, to which if it had been said by a human voice, follow God, or love God, as is said in the law, once sent out and cold with the torpor of infidelity, it would not understand what it heard. Therefore, by certain enigmas, the divine word speaks to the torpid and frigid soul, and by the things which it knoweth secretly, doth it insinuate into it the love which it knoweth not. For allegory to a soul placed far from God, is, as it were, a certain machine by which it may be raised to God, by means of interspersed enigmas, while something which it knows in words of its own, it understands in the sense of words which is not of its own, and by earthly words it is separated from the earth, for knowing exterior words it comes to understand interior. Hence in the book of the song of songs, words of corporeal love are employed, that from the body the soul may be warmed, and led to the love which is spiritual: in which word the holy Scripture is not to be ridiculed, but rather the greater mercy of God is to be considered. For it is to be remarked, how wondrously and mercifully it deals with us in this condescension. We ought, therefore, in these corporeal words to seek what is interior, and as if to leave the body. We ought to this marriage of the spouse to come with the understanding of intimate charity, that is, with the nuptial vest with which if we are not clothed we shall be driven away to eternal darkness and the blindness of ignorance. We ought by these words of passion to pass to the virtue of impassibility, for the holy Scripture in its words is like a picture in its colors, and he is foolish indeed,

\* In Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ, cap. 7.

† De Præparatione Animi ad Contemplationem, cap. 5.

who so adheres to the colors as to be ignorant of the thing which is painted.”\*

But it was not in words alone that the enigmatical expression of the Church was conveyed. Her ceremonies also were high symbols, demonstrating things of which the mystic sense and invisible truth are known by divine illumination to the angelic spirits. Philosophers and poets will find no works more rich in profound and beautiful thoughts than those which are designed to develop and explain the ecclesiastical symbols, written during the middle ages by such men as Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Durandus,† Duranti,‡ Remy of Auxerre,§ Honoré St. Autun,|| St. Bruno of Asti,¶ Martene,\*\* and many others. The symbolic sense of the holy vestments worn by her priests was seen in the sublime prayers which they repeated as they clothed themselves to minister at the altar.†† A long sermon of Ives de Chartres is devoted to explaining, for the edification of manners, the mystic beauty of the priest's vestment, in which every part had a divine meaning. “Witness,” says Walafried Strabo, “that alb denoting purity, that belt signifying continence, that stole obedience, and that flowing chasuble which is placed over all to denote charity, the greatest of all virtues.”‡‡ The gloves of the bishop were put on to signify that his good works were sometimes to be in secret and not before men; and they were laid aside, to remind him that his light was to shine before men.§§ The mystic sense of the pallium, symbol of unanimity, as Pope Symmachus styles it, writing to a bishop of Austria, in the year 504,|||| and which ancient authors mention as being taken from the body of St. Peter, that is to say, from the altar over his relics, and to which they ascribe the plenitude of the pontifical office,¶¶ is explained by Isiderus Pelusiota, in his epistle to Count Herminius. “The bishop,” he says, “wears upon his shoulders a band, not of linen but of wool, to signify that he is an imitator of Christ, the great shepherd who carried on his shoulders the sheep which he had lost and found.” In the same manner Simeon Gretserus interprets the omophorium.\*\*\* The procession is the way to the celestial country. “He who ministers to others the light of good works is spiritually an acolyte,” says Hugo of St. Victor.††† Many usages and institutions will be unintelligible if we do not bear in mind their spiritual interpretation. Why, for example, was a church to be consecrated afresh if the altar had been moved, but only its walls washed with salt if the other parts of the building had been repaired after having fallen? Ives de Chartres explains this, by showing, that as the altar signified faith, its removal signified a loss of faith, which could only be repaired by a fresh reception of sacred mysteries; but the rest of the edifice when

\* Richard. Victorin. in *Cantica Canticorum Prolog.*

† *Rationale Divin. Offic.* ‡ *De Ritibus Eccles. Cath.* § *Tractat. de Dedic. Eccles.*

|| *Gemma Animæ.* ¶ *De Sacramentis Eccles. Myst. atque Eccles. Ritibus.*

\*\* *De Antiq. Eccles. Ritibus.* †† *Benedict. XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, sect. 1. 54—62.*

‡‡ *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Lib. I.* §§ *Id. cap. 55.* ||| *Germania Sacra, I. 7.*

¶¶ *Sicilia Sacra, I. 41.* \*\*\* *In Codinum. Lib. I. c. 1.*

††† *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ, cap. I.*



injured and repaired, was only to be washed with salt, to show that by tears and penance other sins were to be purged away. Thus, as he says, "whatever was done in the temple made with hands signified what ought to be done spiritually within us, that by the observance of visible sacraments we might be led to the knowledge and love of the invisible building." \* It may be remarked generally, that the Church had nothing for mere ornament, but, like nature, all her rites had regard to us as well as beauty. She loved symbols that were beautiful, but no unmeaning decorations. It is observable also, that a vast number of loving harmonies and sweet incidents, fruitful in sublime poetical, and religious emotions, were produced by keeping this in mind, and doing things in consequence simply and spiritually, without attending to the part which was material, without any regard to formality, or fancied decorum, but just as the bare need of the occasion required.

As yet we have taken but a very cursory glance at the divine offices, and already we can perceive with what solemn majesty they were clothed, and how well they corresponded to that sentiment of beauty, under the religious feeling, which, in the unity of our life of perception, divides itself into the epic of inspiration, the dramatic of resignation, and the lyric of devotion. O how the soul is moved at that solemn harmony of holy song, at that anthem chanted by a hundred voices, recurring with such irresistible precision and with as much certainty as if ordained by some law of nature, at that instant rising of the tall lights, when the still sweet tone of the saintly orison solitarily ascends. So have I found it under the noble dome of Florence, where, on one side, stood the portrait of Dante, and in the centre, the last work of Michael Angelo, the dead Christ in the arms of his mother,—sublime master-piece ! which death prevented him from finishing. "Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas." The Church had many secrets to minister refreshment to the parched and fainting soul. Her silence had words—for, as St. Ambrose says, "Non solos Dominus audit loquentes qui audiebat Moysen tacentem. Plus audi tacitas cogitationes morum quam voce omnium."† What rapture in that lofty, that deep, that sweet, that divine silence in which all injuries are forgotten—that admirable silence, as much superior to all harmony as the Divine darkness is more luminous than the sun and every other light in heaven,‡—yielding at length only to that majestic voice which comes to our ears, after the lapse of ages, through Moses, the rapt prophets, the Psalms and Gospels, and which, like the voice of God himself, "breaks the proud cedars, and makes the deserts tremble."§ The divine office was not a mere rise and fall of organ sound swelling and dying away under the Gothic arches, and causing solemn reverberations like those mountain echoes, which produce such a pleasing astonishment in the admirers of nature, who make journeys to hear waterfalls, or cannon fired under hanging rocks.

\* Iyonis Carnot. Epist. LXXX.

† Tarro, Dialoghi ovvero della Pace.

‡ Lib. Offic. 1. 41.

§ Psalm xxiii.

In the Catholic Church the divine office was a provision, not for the vague raptures of a wandering mind, but for the wants of the understanding and, through the intelligence, for the necessities of the heart. At the farthest extremity of her vast temples, through the long and lofty aisles the words of the psalm, of the antiphon, or the hymn, came to the ear loud and distinct:—and certainly, no harmony of instruments could equal the effect produced by that unearthly light of words which issued from the sanctuary.—How solemn, on entering beneath Ogysgean vaults, to hear the loud solitary voice entoning from the choir, the first verse of a psalm—“*Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum*”—which is then caught up by a multitude, in which laymen’s voices mingle with the priests’, eager to complete that sublime announcement.

Sometimes the Church, in her affliction, appears like a person become insensible through excess of sorrow, and reduced to a state in which the soul wishes to forget every thing but the counsels of eternal wisdom—as where she sings the *tenebræ*, and suddenly interrupts the chant of her particular sorrow, to break forth in that exclamation, expressing a general thought—“Blessed is the man who hath borne the yoke from his youth.” What terrible sadness in those tones and words of the matins on Maunday Thursday—“*Melius illi erat, si natus non fuisset?*”—How awful and impressive are those tearful or joyful fragments which she is continually singing—the beauty of which was so keenly felt by Dante, as appears from his so often introducing a similar usage into his divine vision, like that prophet who begins with a conjunction, to whom were present those things which seem absent to our ignorance, and in whose mind interior and exterior things were so conjoined, as if he beheld both at the same time, so that his words were only a continuance of his inward thought. At one time you hear a voice saying, “*Martinus adhuc catechumenus hac me veste contextit;*” at another, “*Sancti mei, qui in carne positi certamen habuistis;*” at another, “*Media nocte clamor factus est;*” at another, *Mea nox obscurum non habet, sed omnia in luce clarescunt;*” and all the while there is on every side a crying,

“Blessed Mary! pray for us.

Michael and Peter! all ye saintly host.”\*

How conformable to the most intimate emotions of the human heart, is that frequent repetition of solemn and suppliant words, round which the mind seems desirous of lingering, as if it could not be torn away from them. Without recurring to the repetitions which occur in the Psalms, and in other parts of holy Scripture, of which St. Hilary gives so profound an explanation, we can witness how true to nature is this feature of the liturgy, by referring to the ancient grave tragedians, where the chorus, in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, desires Clytemnestra to repeat what she has just announced respecting the fall of Troy—adding,

\* Dante, *Purg.* XIII.

"I should wish to hear those words continually, and to be filled with admiration while you repeat them again and again."\* In the high lyric pathetic beauty of the hymns, we feel the true power of poesy; while that syllabic composition of song in Pindar's style imparts a tone of the utmost majesty to the triumphs of the poor. Some of the antiphons contain the last words of martyrs in their agony; others the memorable exclamations of confessors before kings; others the sentences of holy doctors, and replies of saints, on occasions that are transmitted in the archives of history to everlasting renown. Such are those words, sung on the festival of St. Laurence—"Quo progredieris sine filio, Pater? Quo, sacerdos sancte, sine ministro properas?" Will you hear how the vilest instrument of torture can be made sublime by the confession of a martyr? Hear that fearful cry of the Church on the same great day—"In craticula te Deum non negavi, et ad ignem applicatus te Christum confessus sum." How impressive are those anthems, sung on the festival of the great advocate of Gaul—"Dixerunt discipuli ad beatum Martinum, cur nos, Pater, deseris?" and that—"Domine, si adhuc populo;"—those sung on St. Andrew's day, "O bona crux, quæ decorem et pulchritudinem de membris Domini suscepisti;" those on the feast of St. Clement, "Omnes una voce dixerunt: ora pro nobis, sancte Clemens:" those on St. Agatha's day, "Quis es tu qui venisti ad me curare vulnera mea? Ego sum Apostolus Christi," and those on St. Cecilia's day, which relate the visit of Valerianus to the catacombs on the Appian way, in search of St. Urban, who was there concealed?

The antiphons on the festival of St. Lucia, at vespers, and in the office of the night and at lauds, bring us in presence of scenes so pathetic, so ineffably sweet and sad, that a youthful mind can make no comment upon them, unless by weeping. "In tua patientia possedisti animam tuam, Lucia sponsa Christi: odisti quæ in mundo sunt, et coruscas cum angelis: sanguine proprio inimicum vicisti." Can you hear what is sung without feeling the fountain of tears flow over? "Rogavi Dominum meum Jesum Christum, ut ignis iste non dominetur mei." Can you hear what follows without experiencing that chill which attends the sublime mysterious consolation? "Soror mea Lucia, virgo Deo devota, quid à me petis, quod ipsa poteris præstare continuo matri tuæ? Nam et fides tua illi subvenit et ecce salvata est." Can you hear, lastly, the song of triumph without falling upon your knees? "Benedico te, Pater domini mei Jesu Christi. Quia per filium tuum ignis extinctus est à latere meo?"

A modern poet, in his description of the first Christian society, when he introduces the evening prayer, can find no words more harmonious or noble, amidst his gracious and sublime picture, than those which the Church actually uses in her complin office—"Visita, quæsumus, Domine, habitationem istam:" and he observes, that through familiarity many are insensible to the beauty of this prayer. In fact, when any of these collects, or the words of some litany, which have a cry



for every feeling of the heart, are placed by a poet in the midst of the most brilliant passage, there is no transition perceptible, no interruption to the beauty and majesty of the style ; but the words of the Church seem the genuine effusion of the poet, in his happiest moment of inspiration. What majesty in those antique verses murmured by the priest—the force of which has been so often felt by hell ! Witness those words in the office of the dedication, pronounced by the pontiff on first entering the Church, while with his crosier he traces the victorious sign upon the threshold : “*Ecce signum crucis, fugiant phantasmata cuncta !*”

While many must have felt how the prayers of the Church are composed with attention to the sweets of harmonious cadence, there are perhaps few at present who remark sufficiently with what accurate precision they invariably agree with the most profound truths of philosophy, as well as with the mysteries of faith. Political science might be learned from her prayers for princes and for all the faithful—as when, amidst the joy of the paschal solemnities, she prays that God may enable his people to attain to perfect liberty \*—and physiological researches might be furthered by a close attention to the words of her various supplications. Nor can we overlook the undeviating consistency and the strict adherence to definite principles, which characterize all expressions in the divine office. Of this, Hugo of St. Victor may supply an instance. “The spirit of itself,” he says, “is termed spirit—and in connection with the body it is called soul. The human soul, because it can exist both in the body and out of it, is called, in the ecclesiastic offices, soul and spirit. Therefore,” he says, “the holy Church, which believes most faithfully in the resurrection of the flesh, prays not only for the spirit, but also for the souls of the faithful.”†

Well, indeed, on every consideration, may these be styled angelic offices. In the grand painting in the Church of St. Dominick at Bologna, St. Thomas—himself rather an angel than a man, one of those, of whom the whole course of the world’s history can hardly produce two or three examples—is represented writing the *Lauda Sion* from the dictation of angels, whose beaming countenances are reflected in his looks. Of the hymn, “*Gloria in excelsis*,” the writers of the middle age simply say, “This was begun by the angels and finished by doctors of the Church.”—“*Prima hujus hymni verba e cœlo ad nos angelorum voce derivata sunt*,” says Cardinal Bona.—“*Cætera quis addiderit incertum est.*”‡

The origin of the hymn on Palm Sunday, “*gloria, laus, et honor tibi sit, rex Christe redemptor*,” is thus related. “Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, being falsely accused and imprisoned by the Emperor Lewis, son of Charlemagne, in a tower at Angers, on Palm Sunday the procession passed by the prison, when he opening his casement and making silence, intoned these verses of his own composition. The Emperor, who was present, was so pleased that he ordered him to

\* Easter Monday.

† Allegor. in Marcum, Lib. III.

‡ Benedict. XIV. Rer. Liturg. Lib. II. cap. 4.

be released, and restored to his see, and from that day these verses were sung in the procession."\*

Time and words would both fail me if I attempted to point out all the beauty and beatific influence of the various forms of devotion practised in the Church. Only let the litanies of our Blessed Lady, of Jesus, and of the saints, which are sung in every region of the earth, be recalled to memory,—only let it be considered how they express the feelings with which hastening shepherds and adoring kings in Bethany must have beheld the virgin mother of the Divine infant,—that the symbolical titles given to her in accordance with the usages of sacred Scripture, can inspire the loftiest and purest conceptions of grace almighty,—that a soul which is enlightened by the Divine intelligence, discovers and feels within herself things which can never be expressed, except in symbolie language,—that the love for Jesus can only dictate short seraphic praises, and ardent desires to supplicate his power,—that those adopted in reference to Mary, besides their intrinsic beauty, are sanctified by the innumerable holy persons who have used them from age to age, in life and death,—how the litany of the saints transports us into the presence of all the great and good that have adorned the Church in past time—the apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, monks, hermits, virgins, widows, and all the saints of God—how it raises up their image before the mind's eye,—how it carries us into the colosseum of Pagan Rome, into the catacombs, into the deserts of Thebaid, into the caves of the mountains and forests, into the cells and monasteries of the middle age, and finally, into the confines of the ineffable presence of the elect in glory !—how, returning to ourselves, it reminds us of every evil to be shunned in the passage of mortal life, and of every good to be desired,—how it instructs, elevates, and ravishes the soul,—only let this be considered, and I think, in a mind most prejudiced with a prejudicating humor, these will all be found in excellency fruitful.

The corrections which some men, in modern times, have proposed in the offices, only furnish an additional evidence that they had no profound sentiment of religious truth, and that even those few mysteries of faith which they profess outwardly, have never been, as with Catholics, transfused into their very souls. Such is the necessary inference to be drawn from that substitution which was invented of the term *Redemptor* for *Regina* in the hymn, "*Salve Regina*;" for, to no Catholic would such words ever occur in addressing his Redeemer as to say that to him he had recourse in the sorrows of his pilgrimage, since he knows at least, by faith, that his life should be Christ, and that he should live in Christ; but to his blessed mother he turns in sighing and sorrowing in this vale of tears. Sooth, when one hears the moderns propose to modify or alter what the Church has ordained, one might think it enough to answer them in the words of Beatrice to Dante, when he beheld him terrified at the shout of spirits in Paradise—

—“Knowest not thou thou art in heav’n ?  
 And knowest not thou, whatever is in heav’n  
 Is holy, and that nothing there is done  
 But is done zealously and well ?”\*

One whose lore has been by genius guided may be warned with somewhat of Mercutio’s zeal when he hears certain lipping, affecting fantasticoes, new tuners of accents, fashion-mongers, speaking on such subjects, as if any fluent phrase man were competent to correct the liturgy of the Catholic Church ; and one who is of intelligence profound may indulge a smile at their expense ; for these pretended clear and exact speakers, like Euripides, are sure to be convicted of absolute error when they have an Æschylus for their judge ; but the milder and gentler ascetic, to whom piety imparts the privilege of genius without its dangers, will be content with observing that prayer, by its very nature, must be mysterious, and that they who approach God, with ardent devotion, must have very different notions of what is fitting language, from others, who, with unmoved affections, would draw towards him scientifically with their lips alone ; consequently, that it is wrong to criticise pieces of this kind, since one ought rather to respect them as mystic words which comprise a spiritual sense, and which are so many testimonies of the sublimity of the state to which their authors were raised.

The moderns pride themselves on certain studied compositions which they seem to consider perfect models of prayer. Certainly no one can object to these forms on the ground of their not being sufficiently clear, as far as the words themselves are concerned, which are very precise ; or of their omissions, for every want that can be conceived is specified ; but it may be doubted whether they would have sounded religious, or even wise, to our ancestors, who were very averse to the use of long wordy narrations in addressing God, and who even considered it an indication of the divine spirit when nothing nominally was sought in prayer.† “That kind of supplication,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “which consists in merely accumulating epithets, such as *miser cordia mea, refugium meum, susceptor meus, liberator meus*, and so on, is so much the more full of internal delight as it is imperfect in external expression ; for affection has this property, that the more fervent it is within, the less can it be developed externally by the voice. And whatever be the words we use, the nearer devotion approaches to humility, the more acceptable is it to God. In no way is God more effectually bent to hear us than when the mind of the suppliant is wholly converted to him with affection. And, therefore, whatever be the words of supplication, they are never absurd if they are only calculated to excite the affection of the suppliant to love God, or, what is still better, if they demonstrate that he is already kindled with his love.”‡ Nor is this all, the Doctors of the middle age had learned with the author of the Angelic Hierarchy, that as negations in divinity are often true affirmations, so to the obscurity of mys-

\* Parad. XXII. † Card. Bona, de Discretione Spirituum, cap. 8. ‡ De Modo Orandi libellus.



teries, a manifestation by means of dissimilar forms is more adapted,\* and that divine and celestial things are often beautifully expressed by dissimilar symbols.

Hence, as Hugo of St. Victor thinks, oxen, lions, eagles, horses, wheels, chariots, thrones, roses, towers, gates, stars, and similar figures are introduced, which, in the estimation of those who only regard external things, are ridiculous, but to those who think piously and profoundly, they are far otherwise; for besides that from all material and bodily forms, figures may be taken to represent the incorporeal splendors of a spiritual nature, it is certain that the very dissimilitude of the symbol conduces to express the excellence of the supernal object; for dissimilar figures, more than similar emblems, lead the mind from material and bodily things, and prevent it from resting in them. Every figure, therefore, so much more evidently demonstrates truth in proportion as by its dissimilitude it is clearly a figure and not the truth, and the more unlike is the figure, so much the more does it lead the mind to truth, preventing it from resting in the similitude. Therefore the wisdom of holy theologians wonderfully descends to the use of indecorous similitudes, not permitting our material carnal sense, so in love with matter, to rest in material images, but compelling it to pass on in search of other things more fair and true, and by the very baseness of the image, purging the intellectual power of the soul from all admixture with images, in order that purely and simply it may be led to contemplate spiritual and invisible things.† Moreover, to any one who reflects, it is evident that a prayer of any length which is to be often repeated, must not be a studied, smooth composition, like a narrative arranged according to the rules of rhetoric, for besides that mere rhetorical effect, however sublime may be the emotion resulting from it, can never satisfy the religious ideal, such an attempt would argue an ignorance of the inevitable impotence of human language to approach what is due to the perfections of God, and the wiser heart would disdain the presumptuous effort of the understanding. After the first effervescence, all this froth of eloquence, and this inflated wisdom, would be converted into dregs, such as would excite rather loathing than kindle devotion; but as a philosopher remarks, when we have employed the loftiest hyperboles, and exhausted all the figures of symbolic language, when we have dressed metaphysical abstractions in poetic raptures, when we have ransacked whatever things are most excellent among the creatures, and having defecated them and piled them up together, have made that heap but a rise to take our soaring flight from, when instructed as well as inflamed and transported by that inaccessible light which is inhabited by what we adore, we seem raised and elevated above all that is mortal, and say things that surpass the intelligence of men, we can for ever open our lips in such strains of prayer, because, although, these expressions otherwise applied would be hyperboles, and though they do not express the object, they yet

\* Dionys. Hierarch. cap. 2.

† Hugo Victorin. Annotat. in Cœlest. Hierarch. v

proclaim the fervor of our devotion, and declare not, indeed, what God is, but how much we honor him.

No, the prayers of the Church were composed by saints, and what is more, were used by saints and men of the interior life, of intuitive æsthetic ideas, as some philosophers would say, and they knew what they were about ; or, rather, they wrote from the inspiration of Him who made and knew what was in man. The human heart during many generations has responded to the chord which they alone knew how to touch. Not from a trivial popular erudition, nor from the school of grammarians, nor from the tribune of rhetoricians, but from a sense and contempt of human things, from a profound care and investigation of wisdom, from a deep consideration of their own misery, and of the divine mercy, did they descend to compose these sacred offices.

The Church, it is true, has endeavored to protect the faithful in the possession of her prayers, unmixed with other inventions, by prohibiting all new litanies in the public worship, excepting with such restrictions as one might hope would be generally sufficient to discourage all attempts of this kind ; but it is, perhaps, still rather to be wished than expected, that these modern writers, who never question but that they are in the van of what is termed the march of intelligence, should cease from exercising their talents in this way ; for, generally, in proportion to the poverty and ignorance of the mind, there will be a passion for changing and modifying ancient things. Impelled by a desire to do something, a shallow, conceited, restless intelligence will seek to distinguish itself by reforming, as it pretends, the relics of a less enlightened age ; and, indeed, it would almost seem, as if in a certain stage of society, taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, had a greater charm for the cultivated class than the noblest sentences of a Chrysostom, or than the most majestic symbol of the Catholic liturgy.

But to return. Wondrous is the skill with which the Church in her offices blends together the ancient testament and the new, the figures and the reality, the promise and the accomplishment, and shows in the infinite variety of her forms, the profound unity of the Christian faith. She speaks, she sings herself. All these voices of prophets, evangelists, fathers, doctors, hymnographers, form a magnificent concert in which no dissonance wounds the ear, but all is one spirit and one inspiration, and amidst a warmth, an enthusiasm, a tenderness, an astonishing comprehension of the great characters of the Christian mysteries, and above all, a firm, profound, and wondrously communicative faith.

Admirably has the Church evinced her judgment with regard to that greatest of difficulties which used to be treated of by the ancient philosophers, the observing of what the Greeks termed *πρέπον*, the decorum of the Latins. This is evinced in every part of the divine offices and ritual, in which the order of words is suited to the authority, the age, the condition, the place, and the time which are involved. Reader, I dare not give the reins to my discourse as we approach certain confines. Truly, with respect to them, it would be well to return to the

ancient discipline of secrecy and the use of doubtful words, which was observed during so many ages, even after the liberty of the church had been accomplished. It is well, like Orestes, to have learned from the purifications with which one has sought to remedy his evils, to know when to speak and when to be silent.\* I would walk lightly here. The very ground seems to bleed and suffer. A great mystery is taking place. I see death and passion, and one is more inclined to weep than to admire; but thus much I may observe, as one who to a single ear imparts his thought, that the sublime poetry of the opening dialogue of the holy Mass has been remarked by so many great authors. This dialogue, says one, "is a true lyric poem between the priest and the catechumen. The former, full of days and experience, groans over the miseries of man, for whom he is about to offer sacrifice. The latter, full of youth and hope, sings the victim by whom he is to be redeemed." When the vaults of our churches resound with the joyful melody of *O filii et filiæ*, what heart does not burn at hearing "the King of glory rises from the tomb! who is this angel clothed in white seated at the entrance of the sepulchre? Apostles hasten! happy are those who have believed and have not seen!" Would not this simple chant of the church bear a comparison with the grandest creation of poetry? Does it not verify the saying of the ancients, that men are winged by means of words, for by these sublime words is not the soul lifted up, and is not the man raised?

Witness again the prose of Easter, *Victimæ Paschali laudes*. Behold how this song of triumph is lively, rapid, how it carries one with it, how in a few lines it invites to joy, relates the great combat, apostrophizes Mary Magdalen as a witness, and makes an act of faith and of prayer, to the victorious Christ. "If that be not the genius of lyric poetry," says a French critic, alluding to it. "I know not what is."

But where should one finish if one were to speak of the "*lauda Sion*," the "*adoro te supplex*," the "*stabat mater*," the "*dies iræ*"? If one were to describe the office of the dead, with its mournful lessons, its awful remembrances, its solemn and heart-piercing tones? When to this majestic poetry and sound, is added the aspect of one of our Gothic churches by night, lighted up, notwithstanding its vastness, so that every mullion of the highest windows of the choir can be traced with all its beauteous tracery against the darkness of the exterior sky, while only the distant vaults of the nave and transepts fly away and bury themselves in mysterious obscurity, as I have seen the sublime Cathedral of Amiens on the night of All-hallows, when the vigils of the dead were sung there, at which an immense multitude assisted till a late hour in profound devotion,—assuredly the impression from the whole on all minds of ordinary susceptibility, must be such as no language can adequately describe; it must be like that resulting from some great event of which the memory is indelible. "Let one only represent to himself," says Michelet,

\* Eumenid. 276.



“the effect of the lights on those prodigious monuments when the clergy moved in procession through those forests of columns, animating the dark masses, passing and repassing through the long aisles, under those complicated arches, with its rich vestments, its tapers, and its chants, when light and sound of unearthly harmony issued from the choir, while the ocean of people responded from the shade below;—there was the true drama, the true mystery, the representation of the journey of humanity through the three worlds, that sublime vision which Dante has immortalized in the ‘*Divina Commedia*.’”

And on all occasions too what a beauty of solemn form surrounds one in the Church? Those shrines with sacred burning lamps in order long; those altars bright with a tall forest of burning tapers, casting streams of tremulous lustre like the matin star; those banners that move on in bright procession; those angel forms bearing the lights; those lofty things which come so slowly moving towards us, that the bride would have outstript them on her bridal day\*—how does all this purify and exalt the imagination? Can we wonder that it should have seemed to our feeling ancestors like the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven, prepared as a spouse adorned for her husband, that they should have expected to hear that great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God? See those beautiful little chapels of our Lady or of the Patron Saint on each side of the nave, where every object is so admirable and delicate that those who assist within may imagine themselves to be in a paradise. There amidst these bright symbols, from this cloud of fragrant incense, sweetly rises the day to Catholic youth, and no marvel that the remaining hours should flow on in innocence and joy. No marvel, I say, that the Church, as she desires in her prayer, should receive spiritual augmentation from what she gains in material space, and that an eternal habitation for the majesty of God, of living and chosen stones, should be prepared out of the suppliant people. Look again, and let your eyes rest upon those children, who stand or kneel clad in white robes, and with lights in their hands, so like things enskyed and sainted, so expressive of purity, of obedience, and love, that if angels were to descend visibly, one concludes that assuredly it would be in such a form. Fix them still upon that altar and mark what is passing before it. How beautiful is everything! how serene! as if the harmonious wisdom of the Church had actually moulded the external form of matter to its own perfection. Is not here that beauty manifested which Plato said was nothing but the splendor of truth? Catholicism has produced all the lovely forms which order can assume within the narrow limits of space and time. Mark the celestial habits and the reverence of the grave wearers. O the sacrifice! how ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly it is in the offering! It fills one’s breast with the emotions described by Dante, when, after telling of the sweet strains of Paradise, he adds,—

\* Dante, *Purg.* XXIX.

“And what I saw was equal ecstasy;  
 One universal smile it seem'd of all things;  
 Joy past compare; gladness unutterable;  
 Imperishable life of peace and love;  
 Exhaustless riches and unmeasur'd bliss.”\*

These impressions are not only thus profound and inspiring, but they are also durable, for to the mind that has once experienced them, all external beauty ever afterwards seems to be only a homage to the mystery of divine love. Every object in nature seems to merit the appellation which the Church applies to the element in the benediction of her fonts, “*hæc sancta et innocens creatura* ;” and, in some way or other, serves to bring the mind in presence of those mysteries which are the fountain of all joy. The separation between spirit and matter is thus removed, and all seems resolved into the unity of an harmonious creation, of which every part is good, so passing lovely, mind cannot follow it, nor words express its infinite sweetness.

But let us investigate these things with unmoved bosom, as one who only chronicles the past. The altar erected by Angelbert, Archbishop of Milan, in the year 830, in the Ambrosian Basilica, was valued at thirty thousand pieces of gold. The whole front was composed of solid gold, studded with innumerable jewels, and over it stood twelve images of silver gilt, representing the Apostles.† That in the Basilica of St. Mark, at Venice, was composed of alabaster and porphyry, and tablets studded with precious stones.‡ Yet every church possessed what Ughelli mentions in describing the Cathedral of Naples, festive coverings for solemn days which could add beauty even to these altars of gold and jewels.§

What must have been the splendor on extraordinary occasions when more than usual magnificence was required? The writers of the middle ages, to describe a person struck mute and made forgetful of everything by one object, say that they felt an impression like that caused by the sight of a high altar at Easter or Christmas; for on these occasions, the Church displayed all her treasures in honor of God, and the people used to offer choice flowers and costly vases for receiving them. Then were used those choral elephantine books of such magnitude and weight that it exceeded the strength of a man to support one of them, and of such rich adornment, that they used to be preserved in treasuries, wonderful specimens of art and industry, whether we consider the exquisite loveliness of the painting, the admirable beauty of the writing, or the costly and superb decoration of the exterior. In that vast and well filled choir, of the dome at Florence, a light darkened on all sides but one, streams upon the huge volume over which it is suspended, which seems then from the distant parts of the nave, like one great flame in that solemn assembly, as if it were literally illuminated by that mighty book. The ancient sacerdotal vestments, besides the general distinctions of color, frequently bore in rich embroidery, either a representation of the mystery of the particular festival on

\* Parad. XXVII. † Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 82. ‡ Id. V. 1177. § Italia Sacra, Tom. VI. 669.

which they were used, or as those in the monastic Church of the Escorial, an image of some saint or of the instrument of his martyrdom, in order to commemorate a patron or local founder. Generally from those white vestments denoting the unsullied lustre of a mystic and immortal joy, to those which are red from the memory of human evils, we can trace the same genius, the same delicacy of conception which designed the ornaments in the stone of the Gothic portal. A chasuble was like the rich splendor of a rose or tulip leaf. The Creator saw man in making the former only imitating his own art. Yet these gave offence to the moderns; as if God who has painted the flowers of the field, and clothed the beasts and fowls of the earth, with such curious and exquisite colors, could be offended at the beauteous vestments of the priest who adores him, who assumes them with prayer, and trembling, and who wears them only out of humble reverence. Many details are extant respecting the pomp of worship in the middle ages. It would seem from an expression of Ives de Chartres, that out of reverence for our Lord, the chalice and paten were generally of solid gold, for he requires that, at least, they should be of silver.\*

In the church of Monte Cassino there were seven greater, and five lesser chalices of pure gold;† but Saba, in his Testament, speaks of silver chalices gilt which he had brought with him from Greece, for the church of St. Saviano at Messana, to which he also gave three most beautiful thuribles which he had purchased from certain Greeks.‡ In a document of the eleventh century we read of books bound in gold, and of gold chalices adorned with admirable gems, with an abundance of various inestimably precious ornaments for divine worship which had been treasured up from ancient times in the great church of Salzburg.§ On two expositors and a ciborium of pure gold, there were reckoned upwards of three thousand of the most precious stones of rare magnitude: one of the expositors wrought with images, was moulded by Archbishop Eberhard de Neunhause, and cast, according to popular report, from a treasure found in Inberg.|| In the cathedral of Naples, in the eighth century, the holy vessels of the altar were of solid gold. These in St. Mark's Basilica, at Venice, were also of gold covered with gems. Ughelli says, that to describe the sacred ornaments, vestments, and other riches in the church of St. Justina at Padua, would require a volume.¶ We read of the ancient church at Durham, that in the processions, the prior had a marvellous rich cope of cloth of gold, which he was not able to walk upright with, for the weightiness thereof, but one held it up on every side. On one vestment only of Loretto they counted seven thousand jewels. In the ecclesiastical annals of Sicily, we read of vestments in the churches of Palermo covered with innumerable pearls.\*\* In an ancient manuscript, which describes

\* Decret. Pars II. c. 131. † Chron. Casinensis, Lib. III. cap. 74. ‡ Sicilia Sacra, II. 1005.

§ Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 181. || Id. 1065.

¶ Italia, Sacra, V. 4. 22; VI. 65.

\*\* Sicilia Sacra, I.



the destruction of Catana, by the eruption of Mount *Ætna*, in the year 1169, in which fifteen thousand persons, including the bishop, and a number of the monastic flock perished, the loss of the ecclesiastical ornaments was deemed a part of the calamity not unworthy of commemoration.

“Unde superbit homo ? Deus una diruit hora  
Turres, ornatus, vestes, cunctosque paratus.”\*

Florence could send forth nothing in costliness or beauty superior to those which were procured from her for the Abbey of Westminster, some of which still clothe on solemn days the worthy successors in the priesthood of England. Frequently it happens in this island, that ancient tombs of pontiffs and abbots are broken open, and invariably we find the vestments of the richest texture and of the most beauteous design. Forty persons worked continually during three years under the conduct of Lermينو, a celebrated embroiderer, making vestments for the Cathedral of Strasbourg. This was in a later age, but an enumeration of the gifts of Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Casino, to the church of that monastery, will convey an idea of the prodigious splendor of public worship in the tenth century.† In consequence of that profusion of jewels which adorned the altars as we remarked in a former book, and which is found again here in surveying the vestments and other ornaments employed in the solemn worship, mineralogical studies were then much cultivated. Thus Petrus Diaconus wrote a book, “*De Generibus Lapidum Pretiosorum*,” which he dedicated to the Emperor Conrad, and he translated from Greek into Latin, the book of Heva, King of Arabia, on precious stones addressed to the Emperor Nero, and which the Emperor Constantine had removed from Rome to Constantinople.‡ Mention has been made of the fragrant odor which filled the holy place on which men need not disdain to philosophize ; for who has not experienced the associations connected with it ? To how many minds does it recall the sweetest years of mortal existence, the recollections of youth, and the thousand circumstances of early life, which derive such secret charm from the solemn and beautiful ceremonies of the sacred choir ? “More good may be drawn from odors than is drawn,” says Montaign, “for I have often perceived that they change me, and act upon my spirits, which makes me approve of what is said respecting the use of incense and perfumes in churches, which is to gladden, excite, and purify the sense, to render us more fit for contemplation.” An affecting allusion to this usage of the Church is often met with in the great ascetical writers. “O most benign Lord Jesus Christ,” cries one of them, “my consolation and refuge in all my trials and tribulation ! O that thou wouldst deign, with celestial light and attending angels, to enter the house of my mind, and from a golden thurible filled with aromatics, to incense all my interior, and to consecrate my heart as a temple of the Holy Ghost, to sign it with the holy cross, to anoint it

\* *Sicilia Sacra*, Tom. I. 581.

† *Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Lib. III. c. 20.*

‡ *Chronic. Casinens, Lib. IV. cap. 66.*

with the oil of grace, to place there the golden urn with manna, and to attach to my side fixedly the book of thy law, that in that I may study celestial things, and thy divine commandments day and night, so long as I shall be an exile on the earth.”\*

Incense, which was used in the Jewish, is of great antiquity in the Christian Church, and it is mentioned with honor in the Scriptures, where it is compared to prayer, of which it is still a symbol.—Light was always regarded as a mysterious emblem. Clemens Alexandrinus thinks that man was called by the ancients *φῶς*, from the same word signifying light.† The lamps and candelabras, of curious workmanship, which were found in the sacred cemeteries of Rome, attest the usage which prevailed in the earliest times at the celebration of the Christian mysteries.‡ In the middle ages, the lights in churches were an occasion of wonderful magnificence. We read that, in the time of Charlemagne, in the church of the monastery of Ania, there was a multitude of lamps of pure silver, in the form of a crown, which used to be lighted with oil on the festivals, which so illuminated the choir, that in the night the whole church was as light as in the day; and before the altar there were suspended seven lamps of the most beautiful and astonishing workmanship.§ Pope Adrian I. in the same age, gave to the church of St. Peter a candelabra, which held, without confusion, thirteen hundred and seventy tapers or lamps. The crowns and chains from which lights were suspended, were often of pure gold or silver.|| The great crowns of silver, from which were suspended thirty-six lamps, hung without the choir before the cross, in the church of Monte Casino.¶ There were there twelve towers of light called Phari, as if to shine over the ocean. Fortunatus, Patriarch of Grao, in the seventh century, gave two crowns of light to the church of that island, which had been desert till the year 565, when Christians first sought an asylum there from the Longobards. In each of these burned an hundred candles.\*\*

Nor was it only during the celebration of the sacred offices that symbolic lights burned; they were maintained perpetually, night and day, before the blessed sacrament, before the images, and before the shrines of the saints;—and a reference to wills, and other documents of the middle age, shows with what zeal devout persons contributed to the expense incurred by them, leaving often their lands to the church for this express purpose. “Pale lamp of the sanctuary,” exclaims a French poet, “why, in the obscurity of the holy place, unperceived and solitary, consumest thou thyself before God? It is not to direct the wing of prayer or of love, to give light, feeble spark! to the eye of Him who made the day. It is not to dispel darkness from the steps of his adorers. The vast nave

\* Thomas à Kempis, *Sermonum Pars III.* 2.

† *Pæd.* Lib. I. c. 6.

‡ P. Aringhi *Roma Subterranea*, p. 282.

§ Vita S. Benedicti Abb. Mabillon, *Acta S. Ord. Bened.* IV. I.

|| *Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis*, in cap. 26, notæ.

¶ *Chronic. Casinensis*, Lib. III. c. 38.

\*\* *Italia Sacra*, Tom. V. 1101.

is only more obscure before thy distant glimmering. And yet, symbolic lamp, thou guardest thy immortal fire, and under the breeze of basilicas, thou dost flicker before every altar, and mine eyes love to rest suspended on this ærial hearth, and I say to them, whom I comprehend not, ye pious flames, ye do well. Perhaps, bright particles of the immense creation, they imitate before his throne the eternal adoration. Is it thus, say I to my soul, that, from the shade of this lower place, thou burnest, a flame invisible in presence of thy God? In the night of the sensible world, I feel that there is a point inaccessible to the obscurity of earth, a dawn on the hills, which will watch all the night long—a star which never sets—a fire which remains unextinguished, unconsumed, in which incense can be at all times enkindled, to ascend in fragrance to heaven.”

The procession with litanies was a solemn symbol, employed in the ecclesiastical offices from remote antiquity, as may be proved from Tertullian. In the first ages, churches were constructed with aisles for the processions, as expressly and constantly as with a sanctuary for the celebration of the eucharist.—

“*Densa triumphali video procul agmina pompa,  
Atque hilares placidosque choros.  
Plurima pars niveis, variis pars altera fulget  
Vestibus auratisque stolis.  
Jam sinuosa leves rapuerunt stemmata venti,  
Jamque micant pia signa crucis.  
Tartareas Christi propellit imago phalanges,  
Et superi properant cives.  
Ordo sacerdotum venerandaque turba canoris  
Carminibus passim exultant.  
Jam devota sacris operitur scena viretis,  
Jam sanctæ resonant voces.  
Alternis precibus pueri, innuptæque puellæ,  
Atque senes, juvenesque canunt.”\**

Dante is reminded of such things on beholding a tribe of spirits in the other world :—

——“Such their step as walk  
Quires, chanting solemn litanies on earth.”

Behold that solemn procession through the aisles of the Abbey Church of St. Germain! The holy virgins in pure white robes, like very sanctity, and bearing bright tapers in their hands; crowds of holy laymen, the noble and the mechanic, side by side, alike humble, alike devout; the saintly students, the venerable clergy, slowly moving along, singing their pensive melody through the dusky space, shedding radiance as they pass along, while all around them lies in deep darkness. What an emblem is here of the path of the just through earth’s short pilgrimage. O, it is an impressive thing to mark the countenance of each one who glides before you. There are some who walk, rapt like men in sleep, unconscious of all

\* Card. Bona, de Divina Psalmody. 289.



around them, conversant solely with the internal vision, in a rapture of angelic thought. Nicolas Flamel, whom we have so often had occasion to mention as constantly employing painters and carvers to adorn places in Paris with devout figures and inscriptions, caused to be represented, on the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, a procession in sculpture, under which was written,

“Moult plaist à Dieu procession,  
S'elle est faite en dévotion.”

During the ages of faith, the procession was considered an institution of no small importance, in an intellectual and spiritual point of view. Before those mystic flames, which seem to be mingled with the supernal luminaries,—emblems of that star which never sets—it was thought that the delusive meteors of corrupt passion would die away, and be no more seen. That pious crowd, still increasing as it proceeded, which passed on, walking in such humble guise after the blessed sacrament, was in sooth a sublime spectacle, as exhibiting to the eye of the world a multitude of men who sought to follow their celestial King, hungering and thirsting after him. “Isti sunt viri sancti, facti amici Dei,” is the involuntary testimony of all who behold them. Such were the conquerors and friends of God, who, despising the orders of triumphant princes, deserved eternal recompense.

Whether this ghostly triumph—so venerable, from the associations connected with it, so inspiring, from the solemn truths which it symbolically shadowed forth—conduced to sanctify and illuminate the heart, no one, who worthily joined in it, was ever found disposed to question. It was while thus slowly moving along, step by step, with the multitude of believers, having the eyes bent upon the ground, and the ears charmed with an unearthly melody, that men felt their minds impressed with a new sense of the mysterious and supernatural side of life. Then it was that they meditated on the eternal years, contrasted with the little space that remained to them of that mortal existence, the approaching end of which seemed to be proclaimed by the very stones beneath their feet. The earth on which they trod seemed to utter the Homeric lesson,

*οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.\**

Processions besides these, universally observed by the Church, used to be celebrated in particular places, in consequence of the foundations made by private devotion. At Caen it being the custom for every trader in the market to give a penny to God, or more, according to his devotion, each trade selected one member every year, who was to receive this money, and on the day of Pentecost there was made a solemn procession of all the trades, from the church of St. Peter to the church of St. Nicholas, and each bore a great taper, to which was attached as many crowns as had been received from that trade in the course of the year, in order, by this public display, to excite the people to mercy and charity to the poor; and

\* IL. VI 146.

after making the circuit of the church and cemetery of St. Nicholas, the procession was to return in the same order, and the tapers were then to be given up to the Hôtel Dieu."\*—In the year 1412, at the general procession of the Holy Innocents, there were a hundred thousand Parisians who walked barefooted.—So dear to men in the middle ages were these affecting solemnities that we find them observed even in camps, between the contending hosts. The description which Tasso gives of the procession before the walls of Jerusalem, is taken from historical facts. Here first the clergy are seen leading the van, followed by the mighty duke, walking alone, after the manner of princes ; then come the barons and knights, two by two, all chanting the litany, invoking the blessed Trinity, and Christ's dear mother and St. John, the holy angels with the elected twelve, the martyrs, confessors, and those whose writings teach the certain path that leads to heavenly bliss, and hermits also, with cloistered nuns, who pray upon their beads. Singing thus with easy pace, thus ordered they pass along—while the deep caves and hollow mounts give round about them a thousand echoes.—

"It seem'd some choir, that sung with art and skill,  
Dwelt in those savage dens and shady ground ;  
For, oft resounded from the banks, they hear  
The name of Christ and of his mother dear,  
Upon the walls, the Pagans, old and young,  
Stood hush'd and still, amated and amazed  
At their grave order and their humble song ;  
At their strange pomp and customs new they gazed :  
And when the show they had beholden long,  
An hideous yell the wicked miscreants raised,  
That with vile blasphemies the mountains hoar,  
The woods, the waters, and the valleys roar.  
But yet with sacred notes the hosts proceed  
Though blasphemies they hear and cursed things :  
So with Apollo's harp Pan tunes his reed,  
So adders hiss where Philomela sings.  
Nor flying darts nor stones the Christians dread,  
Nor arrows shot, nor quarries cast from slings ;  
But with assured faith, as dreading naught,  
The holy work begun to end they brought."†

With respect to the material grandeur of these spectacles, some idea may be formed by those who have visited Catholic countries even in our times. At the procession in Milan on St. Charles's day, several vast antique crucifixes, of solid silver covered with gold and jewels, and vast candlesticks, of gothic and most exquisite workmanship, are borne along. In the year 1191, took place the consecration of the Church of St. Mary de Flumine, at Ferentinum, which is a town in old Latium, upon a hill near the Latin way. In the procession were borne numerous lighted torches, twenty silver thuribles, twelve silver crosses, and four

\* De Bourgueville Recherches et Antiquitez de Normandie, Liv. II. 40. † IX. 11.

reliquaries.\* To observe what a sense was generally entertained of the symbolic meaning of the procession, we should peruse the ancient writings, and the discourses which were on such occasions addressed to the people, many of which contain passages of extraordinary beauty. "Interior processions we should always make," says Richard of St. Victor, "but chiefly in this solemnity which is presented before us."† St. Bernard speaks as follows:—

"The procession which we are about to celebrate supplies us with many subjects for remark. We are this day about to celebrate a procession, and shortly after it we shall hear the passion. What means this strange conjunction, or what were our Fathers' thoughts in adding the passion to the procession? For the procession represents what was done this day, and why is the passion added which did not follow till the sixth feria? Wisely is the passion added to the procession, that we may learn to place no confidence in any joy of this world, since sorrow is the end of gladness, and that our prosperity may not slay us like fools, but that in prosperous we may be mindful of evil days, as also conversely. For the present scene is mixed with both, not only to secular men, but also to spiritual. Therefore, we have to imitate our Lord's humility in the procession, and his patience in the passion. But why did our Lord wish to have the procession, when he knew that his passion would so soon follow? Perhaps, that the passion might be more bitter which had been preceded by the procession. O! what a contrast between 'tolle, tolle, crucifige eum;' and 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, hosanna in excelsis.' What a contrast between 'King of Israel,' and 'We have no king but Cæsar.' What a contrast between the green branches and the cross, between the flowers and the thorns; between strewing their own vestments for him, and stripping him of his own and casting lots for them! And now in this procession to-day there are those who go before, those who follow our Lord, and those who walk by his side. The first are they who prepare the way for the Lord to your hearts, who guide you and direct your steps in the way of peace. The second are those who, being conscious of their own weakness, follow devoutly and tread in the footsteps of those that walk before. The third, who adhere to his side, are those who chose the best part, who live only to God, and consider his pleasure. But behold all are in the procession of our Lord, and no one sees his face; for those who before are engaged in preparing the way, solicitous about the dangers of others, and they who follow cannot by any means see his face. Those who are at his side can sometimes see him, but only by glances and not constantly or fully, so long as they are on the way. Thus it must be, for no man shall see me and live. I shall not be seen, he says, in this life; no one shall see my face in this way, in this procession. Therefore, may he of his goodness enable us so to persevere in his procession while we live, that in that great procession when he will be received with all that are his by God the Father we may deserve to enter the holy city with him,

\* *Italia Sacra*, I. 675.


† *Sermo in Die Paschæ*.



who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.”\* Again, on the festival of the Purification, he speaks of the procession thus. “In the procession of this day, we shall walk two by two as a sign of fraternal charity and social life. A solitary person intruding himself would disturb the procession, and trouble both himself and others, symbolical of those who separate themselves, caring not to observe the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We shall all carry lighted tapers in our hands, lighted from the holy fire of the altar, and these represent good works; and that humility may be practised, the last are first, and the first last in the procession, for the boys and those of least honor are to walk before. And in the procession no one can stand still, but all must continue to move forwards as in the way of life, where nothing can remain in the same state.”† Thus speaks Bernard, and thus through his lips speak the ages of blessed thirst, so that this solemn walk of choirs was grateful alike to understanding and to sense.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

FTER considering the divine symbolism of the sacred offices, we are naturally led to philosophize respecting the ecclesiastical music which was found such sweet medicine to moderate the thirst of human souls, and prepare them for the refreshing streams of justice. Music, like painting, as a fine art, is a new art, for as we owe perspective painting and the infinite exaltation of the modern over the ancient art to the paintings of the Catholic Church, so we are indebted to the ecclesiastical musicians for harmony. Approach we now to contemplate altars bright with amaranth and gold, and vaults that breathe ambrosial fragrance, and holy words that in the blessed spirits elect, sense of new joy ineffable diffuse, and sacred song that wakens rapture high; no voice exempt, no voice but well can join melodious part, such concord is in faith. In all ages men have been convinced that music was a thing divine and belonging to the worship of God. Maximus of Tyre enforces this doctrine.‡ Strabo says, that music is the work of God.§ Pythagoras, that he might keep his mind always imbued with the divinity, used always to sing and play on the harp before going to rest, and in the morning. He also ascribed importance to it in respect of education.|| Socrates, when of venerable age, did not disdain to learn the principles of music with boys. Plutarch, who calls it the uni-

\* Dominic. in Ramis Pal. Serm. II.

† Id. in Purificat. Serm. II.

‡ XXI.

§ Lib. X. Geograph.

|| Jamblich. 15.

versal science,\* says, that the Lacedemonians paid more regard to music than to their food. The music of the ancients, which began in temples, was regarded as the source of civilization. Plato and Aristotle maintained that music was an essential part of the education of youth.† Plotinus thought that by music men were led to God. Quintilian says, that music is conjoined with the knowledge of divine things, that the wisest men were studious of music, and that it formed part of the education of youth from the days of Chiron and Achilles to that time.‡ Cicero observes the general opinion of the Greeks, that the highest erudition was in music, so that Epaminondas the prince, he says, of Greece, was skilled in playing upon the lute and in singing, and Themistocles when he declined to play at a banquet was considered on that account less learned. Whoever was ignorant of music was regarded as deficient in learning.§ The early fathers remarked the excellence of music in its adaptation to the human soul. "The science of music," says St. Augustin, "is probably the science of moving well the mind."|| "To sing and to chant psalms," saith he, "is the business of lovers."¶ "Nothing," says St. Chrysostom, "so exalts the mind and gives it as it were wings, so delivers it from the earth, and loosens it from the bonds of the body, so inspires it with the love of wisdom, and fills it with such disdain for the things of this life as melody of the verses and the sweetness of holy song."\*\* The vague indetermined mysterious character of music defies all exact interpretation, but for that very reason it admirably represents the interior man. Whether it throws the soul into a revery full of noble melancholy, or into an enthusiastic rapture, no art harmonizes so marvellously with the sentiment and idea of infinity, and with the relations of God and man. "Music, like poetry, is a longing desire which charms and even seizes upon the soul with a magical power. In music," continues Frederick Schlegel, "as in other arts, the higher and the earthly, like soul and body, are bound to one another. The heavenly longing desire and the earthly are often inseparably blended together in one tone, as is the case also with the first sentiments of youth."†† How beautifully does Shakespeare represent the effect of even the lightest music upon minds contemplative, in the scene between Amiens and Jacques, when the former repeats that song which begins with

"Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And tune his merry note,  
Unto the sweet bird's throat."

And Jacques says, immediately, "More, I pr'ythee more." "It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jacques," replies Amiens. "I thank it," cries his friend. "More, I pr'ythee more." I can make any song yield melancholy. "More, I pr'ythee more." Still the other is loath. "My voice is rugged, I know it cannot please

\* Lib. de Music.

† Conviv. de Legibus, VII. Politic.

‡ Lib. I. 10.

§ Tuscul. I. 2.

|| Lib. I. de Musico.

¶ Serm. 33.

\*\* Hom. in Ps. 41.

†† Philosophie der Sprache, 124.

you." The answer is the same. "I do not desire you to please me ; I do desire you to sing ; come more ; another stanza." The philosophers of the middle age think it not too much to affirm that a love of music has a connection with a love of justice ; for the pleasure of music arises from finding that every thing moves according to order, and that there is no disarrangement or discord. In fact, as Novalis says, "All enjoyment is musical,"\* and for the same reason, since the original thirst of man is for justice. Great were observed to be the effects of music. St. Albertus, a monk, while he was a secular in the world, being present at a certain play with its music respecting the life and conversation of St. Theobald, was suddenly by divine grace so filled with compunction, that he began from that hour to lead a life of great sanctity.† St. Ansbertus, a monk, and Bishop of Rouen, while as yet a layman, and living in the court of the king, hearing some instruments of music said within himself, "O glorious Creator, what will it be to hear that song of the angels who love thee, which is to sound for ever in the celestial courts ! How sweet and admirable will be that chorus of saints when you ordain that the sounds of a mortal voice, and the skill of human instruments, should be able to excite the minds of the hearers to praise thee devoutly, their God and Creator." When I was at Rome, I heard a young and noble Englishman, a man of blessed life, and now of saintly order, express the same feelings on hearing music in the street. Gerard says of St. Adalhard, Abbot of Corby, that he was constantly of such a sweet intention towards God, that if while assisting at the royal council he heard melody, he had it not in his power to refrain from tears ; for all sweet music seemed to remind him of the sweetness of his celestial country.‡ St. Dunstan, while a youth, withdrew from the world to devote himself to music, and to the meditation of celestial harmony.§

"They who love God," says St. John Climacus, "are excited by secular and spiritual songs and melody to joy, and divine love, and to tears, although they who are addicted to pleasure may collect from them matter of perdition for themselves.|| Osbert, in his life of St. Dunstan, relates that the holy archbishop had recalled many from the turbulent affairs of the world by means of his musical science. Brother Pacific, one of the first disciples of St. Francis, had been celebrated while in the world for his musical science, and the holy Father employed him to instruct the other brethren in singing the hymn of the Sun, which he had composed in honor of God ; for he wished that they should always sing it after their sermons, and that they should tell the people they were God's musicians, and that they wished no other payment for their music but to behold them doing penance for their sins. Grievous enmity existed between the bishop and the governor of Assisium. St. Francis deputed two of his friars to present themselves before the governor, and invite him on his part to repair, with as many

\* *Schriften*, II.

† *Surius*, 7 Aprilis.

‡ *Vita S. Adalhardi. Mabillon Acta S. Ord. Bened. Sæc. IV. p. 1.*

§ Osbert, *Monachus Cantuar. in ejus vita.*

|| *Grad. XV.*



persons as he could collect, to the bishop's house, whither he had deputed two others to apprise the bishop. When all were assembled, the friars said, "Lords and brethren, beloved in Jesus Christ,—Father Francis being prevented by sickness from coming here in person, has sent us here to sing a canticle which he has composed, and he implores you to listen to it devoutly." Then they commenced this song, to which St. Francis had added a strophe appropriate to the occasion. The governor heard them with hands joined, and eyes raised to heaven, weeping. When they had finished, he professed his desire to be reconciled with the bishop, who on his side only lamented that he had not been the first to show an example of humility. Then they embraced and kissed each other, mutually demanding forgiveness, and filling the beholders with wonder and joy.\*

"Music," says Cassidorus, "dispels sorrow, soothes anger, softens cruelty, excites to activity, sanctifies the quiet of vigils, recalls men from shameful love to chastity, by the sweetest rapture expels the diseases of the mind, and soothes, through the medium of the corporeal senses, the incorporeal soul."† They who would dwell on this subject, may consult Clemens Alexandrinus;‡ Justin Martyr,§ Bede;|| John of Salisbury,¶ who pays a tribute to the noble nature and admirable properties of music; William of Paris;\*\*\* and Athanasius Kircher Fuldensis.†† Many and interesting are the reflections of the ancients with respect to the principles and application of music. Plutarch explains a saying of antiquity, "Love taught music,"‡‡ on the ground adopted by the Platonists, who taught that love was the master of all arts and sciences. Theophrastus says that music has three principles—"grief, pleasure, and the divine inspiration." If our space were not too limited, one would be tempted to collect some interesting details respecting the different kinds of ancient music, and the use to which each was deemed applicable. It appears that the Dorian, which corresponded with our church music generally, was deemed proper for the education of youth; that the Hypodorian, which seems to answer more particularly to our vesper strains, was rather soothing; and therefore the Pythagoreans used it in the evening to appease the cares of the mind, though Aristotle styles it magnificent, constant, and grave.§§ It was called Hypodorian as being not greatly Dorian. The Phrygian music was martial;||| and, what is very remarkable, both Plato and Aristotle interdicted its use to youth. The Hypophrygian was adulatory and attractive, and suited to unstable minds. Aristotle says that its effects are like intoxication.¶¶ The Lydian was the music of pleasure; and yet such is the inherent dignity of man's soul, from which nothing can totally banish the remembrance of its fall, that, as Plato asserted, it was sad and plaintive.\*\*\* It was this which was said to resound in the Elysian fields.†††

\* Les Chroniques des Freres Mineurs Liv. I. c. 116.

† Lib. II. Var. Ep. 40.

‡ Stromat. VI.

§ Qu. 107.

|| Lib. de Musica

¶ Lib. I. c. 6. Policrat.

\*\* De Universo. Pars II. cap. 20.

†† Lib. III. Artis Magnetica.

‡‡ Sympos. Lib. I.

§§ See 19th Problem.

||| Clemens Alex. Strom. VI.

¶¶ See 19th Problem.

\*\*\* III. de Repub.

††† Propert. Lib. IV. Eleg. VII.

So associated is melancholy with the highest joy, that the Hypolydian was decidedly tearful, and said to arise from devotion and gladness; the Mixolydian produced a double effect, for it excited men to joy, but immediately recalled them to sadness. It was this which the ancients used in tragedy. These seven tones were all recognized by the Pythagoreans.\* In accordance with St. Augustin and the early Fathers, St. Thomas, and all the noble geniuses of the middle age, are the faithful echo of the ancients, and agree with their opinion respecting the divine origin of music.

The importance attached to it in the middle ages, may be collected from various contemporary authors, such as Rabanus Maurus;† Isidore;‡ Rupertus Abbas;§ an author mistaken for Bede; and Richard of St. Victor.|| Vincent of Beauvais says that music is joined not only to speculation, but also to morality, for that there is nothing so proper to humanity as to be affected by it, and that no age is exempt from its influence; ¶ and John of Fulda says, that all the Roman Pontiffs were either musicians or men who delighted in music. Raban goes so far as to say, "This discipline is so noble and so useful, that he who is without it cannot properly fulfil the ecclesiastical office.—'Quicquid enim, (he adds,) in lectionibus decenter pronuntiatur ac quicquid de psalmis suaviter in ecclesia modulatur, hujus disciplinæ scientia ita temperatur, et non solum per hanc legimus et psallimus in ecclesia, immo omne servitium Dei rite implemus.' For musical discipline," he continues, "is diffused through all the arts of our life in this manner. First, if we keep the commandments of our Creator, and with pure minds observe his law; for it is proved that whatever we speak, or with whatever sentiment we are internally moved by the pulsation of veins, is associated by musical rhythm with the virtues of harmony. If we observe a good conversation, we prove ourselves associated with this discipline; but when we act sinfully, we have no music."\*\*\*—"Sine musica," says Isidore, "nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta: nihil enim est sine illa."†† In the middle ages, kings had their musicians, great nobles their musicians, towns their musicians. Music was deemed part of liberal erudition. It was treated upon by Boethius, Severinus, Berno, Otho, St Gregory the Great, Theogerus, Cosmas, St. John Dasmascenus, Guido of Arezzo, and many others.\*

In the fourth century, the ecclesiastical music became more artificial than it had been in the infant church;§§ but it was St. Gregory the Great who was the chief author and promoter of the choral song, called from him Gregorian or Roman, which was propagated throughout the whole western Church. This, which was richer and more variegated than the ancient Gallican psalmody, was a precious remnant of the ancient Greek music, which had retained much of its original

\* Card. Bona, de Divina Psalmodia, 431. † De Inst. Clerical. III. 24. ‡ Origin. Lib. II.

§ In Lib. Reg. v. 17.

|| De Contemplate. v. 17.

¶ Speculum Doctrinale, Lib. XVIII. cap. 2.

\*\*\*De Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. cap. 24.

†† Etymolog. Lib. III.

†† Gerbert, de Cantu et Musica Sacra Præfat.

§§ Id. Tom. I. p. 240.

beauty. St. Gregory founded a school expressly to teach it, and compiled books with notes to perpetuate it. We find musical skill, joined with exact judgment in divine mysteries, reckoned among the qualities of Leo II., Bishop of Palermo, in the seventh century.\* During St. Gregory's time the choral song was introduced into England by St. Augustin, as John the deacon relates. Bede is a witness that, in the monasteries of Britain, the divine office was sung as in St. Peter's at Rome.† St. Theodore of Canterbury and St. Wilfrid of York were great patrons of this Gregorian song. In the year 747, in the Council of Cloveshoe, there were decrees for its especial cultivation. Charlemagne, who loved every kind of excellence, endeavored also to promote it throughout the empire, being anxious, as he said, that the Latins should yield in nothing to the Greeks. He was passionately fond of the ecclesiastical chant, and used to sing himself in the church, morning, noon, and night, but only in an under tone, as Eginhard relates. The school of Mentz, for ecclesiastical song, had flourished under Pepin. Charlemagne sent two clerks to Rome, that on their return to Metz they might be able to teach the Roman song. From Metz it was propagated over all France.

The names of some celebrated musicians of this time have come down to us. And modern writers, like Sir John Hawkins, though Protestants, pay profound homage to the genius of those ancient monks and bishops who were the conservators of music during so long an interval.‡

Notwithstanding this extraordinary zeal for the cultivation of music, the relative importance of virtues was not overlooked. Charlemagne condemns some who prefer a clerk or monk that sings well to one that lives justly and holily. For though, he adds, musical discipline is not to be despised, yet if both merits cannot be obtained, it seems more tolerable to us to bear imperfection in singing than imperfection in living.§ In the tenth century, music was in the highest repute. The greatest masters, such as Remi of Auxerre, Hubald of St. Amand, Gerbert, and Abbon, taught it with as much care as the highest science. "*Est decus humanæ naturæ musica summum, quam qui scire negat, ipsum se scire negabit,*" says a manuscript poem in the Vatican, written in the time of Otho the Great. In England, celebrated for musical science were St. Adelm, in the eighth, and St. Dunstan in the tenth century, Eadmer a chanter of the church of Canterbury, in the time of St. Anselm, Simeon at Durham, Joannes Thannatensis, a great mathematician, at Canterbury, Wolston at Winchester, Thomas Walsingham at St. Alban's William Somerset, in the monastery of Malmesbury, and William of Evereux, treasurer of Henry I. In France, the musical science was celebrated of Geoffrey of Tours, St. Odo of Cluny, Peter, chanter and doctor of the university of Paris, and Adulphus, raised from being a chanter to the episcopal see of Autun, an example not unfrequent in history. Pope Urban IV. in

\*Sicilia Sacra, notit. I. 37.

† Lib. IV. de Gest. Angl. c. 18.

‡ General Hist. of the Science and Practice of Music. § Capital. II. An. 811. Baluz. Tom. I.



the thirteenth century, had been educated among the children of the choir of a cathedral ; and Lebeuf mentions a certain cardinal who had risen from the same condition in the church of Lyons. Orderic Vitalis says that the Abbot Durandus, having a great knowledge of music, enriched the divine office with new pieces, and with new and very melodious airs. In Ireland there seems to have been no regular ecclesiastical chant introduced till the twelfth century. St. Bernard says that St. Malachy was the first to establish it there, "according to the custom of the whole world." John the Monk, of Fulda, a disciple of Raban Maur, was a poet and musician, who first composed with varied modulation, artificial song in the church in Germany—a country in which it took such deep root, than in no other part of Europe was it more assiduously cultivated." Mabillon, in his *Itinerary*, speaks of the great importance which the Germans attached to music in the church ; whereas, he says, the French in his time regard figured music as an impediment to devotion. But it was an obscure and devout recluse who prepared a new epoch in the history of music. This was Guido of Arezzo, a Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Pomposa, in the Duchy of Ferrara, who in the eleventh century, was the author of the present system of musical notes, for which he was so greatly honored, that Pope John XX. sent three messengers to invite him to come to him. He published his *Micrologus* about the year 1028. In a contemporary work he is entitled "*Musicus et monachus, nec non eremita beandus.*"—In the prologue to his work, and in his letter to Michael, he speaks of the success of his invention with great humility. "Since my natural condition, and the imitation of the good, made me diligent, I began, among other studies to instruct boys in music. At length the divine grace was with me, and some of them, by the use of our notes, learned, within the space of a month, to sing at sight new and most difficult pieces, so that it furnished a spectacle to many.—Since posterity will be able, with the greatest ease, to learn the ecclesiastical chant, which cost me and all before me so much pains, I trust that I and you, and the others who assisted me, may obtain eternal salvation, and, by the mercy of God, remission of our sins, or at least some prayers from the charity of so many. For if they used to intercede with God so devoutly for their masters, from whom they could scarcely in ten years, obtain an imperfect knowledge of singing, how will they not pray for us and for our assistants, who in the space of a year, or at the most, within two years, can make them perfect singers."

With respect to the merits of the music of the middle ages, it is certain that it had arrived at a very high degree of perfection. The love of God can supply and surpass all things. The most sublime elevation to which the soul can attain, becomes also, in relation to art, an inexhaustible source of celestial inspiration ; for that which is most admirable in music, is derived from the sentiment of religion. In comparison, therefore, with the productions of the old Catholic school, modern science must stand mute. What, in fact, can any secular academy do to encourage music, comparable to a church, where the voices of three thousand faith-

ful are to mingle in the hymn of lofty praises, which is to be heard with ravishment by the glorified choirs of heaven? On this ground, the importance of the musical schools which were in cathedrals, where children were instructed, has been pointed out by recent authors.\*

Truly, it would require a different tongue from mine to speak of all the musical beauties in the sacred offices. The plain chant in the Holy Week, irresistibly affects the soul with a sadness unutterable. That of the "Stabat," places the blessed Mary before our eyes as if with the pencil of Raphael; that of the "Miserere," moves the soul to its centre; that of the funeral office, is terrific like the voice of death, sublime like the angel's announcement of resurrection. The admirers of the wonders of art flock to the Sextine Chapel, at Rome, to behold the last Judgment of Michael Angelo, but in every country of the world, one may turn pale with fear and admiration before a still greater work, a composition of still more marvellous energy, before the "dies iræ," which is sung over the dead man's bier. "If a musician were asked to compose a piece without accompaniment, without either rhythm or modulation, and to confide the execution to the rude voice of some parish singer, and on these conditions to create the sublime, where," says a modern French critic, "is there an artist that would accept the wager? Nevertheless, this is what has been realized by some poor monks, whose names have not even come down to us, but in whom faith and piety have been able to accomplish what genius would not have had courage to attempt."

The religious houses have always proved themselves the asylums of the Muse. Jomelli, Gluck, and Mozart, sought advice in music from the Franciscan friar, Martini, of Bologna, who formed a musical library of seventeen hundred volumes, and who is said amidst modern corruptions to have preserved in his compositions all the dignity of the ancient style. The music as well as the poetry of the Catholic Church seem like a faint echo of that primitive language in which man spoke to God in the state of innocence, the sounds of which can revive in some manner those powers of sentiment and virtue, which the Creator placed in his heart. In the middle ages, men were scrupulous in adhering to the great traditions of art in the composition of music. Thus Letaldus says of himself, on composing music for the feast of St. Julian, that "he was unwilling to depart from the similitude of the ancient song, lest he should produce either a barbarous or a novel melody. For the novelty of those musicians does not please me, he adds," speaking like Plato, "who make use of such dissimilitudes that they seem to disdain to follow the old authors." To the same effect speaks Hugo of St. Victor, "*Non enim decet, ut cantus et usus ecclesiasticus fieri debeat secundum arbitrium diversorum, sed firmiter servandus est secundum scripta et instituta majorum.*"

The psalms of David were tuned to that Dorian harmony which sounded forth

\* Sur l'Origine de la Maîtrise des Enfans de Chœurs de la Basilique Metrop. de Paris. Mag. Encyclop. Tom. V.

in the hymn of Terpander, the antiquity of which music is remarked by Clemens Alexandrinus ;\* and as Muller observes, a manly character was always attributed even to the Dorian dialect. St. Bernard, in his letter to the Abbot Ærremacens, describes what ought to be the style of Church music, "full of gravity, being neither lascivious, nor rustic. Sweet without being frivolous, soothing to the ear, but so as also to move the heart. It should appease sadness, mitigate anger, and not diminish but fecundate the sense of the words." There was no affectation or levity in the ecclesiastical music of the middle ages. "With the canticles and hymns of the Church," says Cardinal Bona, "we console this solitude of our exile until we come to our celestial country, when we shall sing that new immortal song, without any mixture of grief." For at present as there are no joys without some misery, so, as the Abbot Paschasius Radbertus says, "there is no song found without lamentation : for songs of pure joy belong to the heavenly Sion, but lamentations to this our pilgrimage." The Church was so impressed with a sense of the importance of music being adapted to the Catholic philosophy, that all music composed by heretics was prohibited from being used in the Church by a synod in the year 1567. In fact, Catholic music is the sister of Catholic manners. It is the expression of faith, hope, and charity: it is the voice of penance, of simplicity, and love. However rich, however ravishing, this was its essential character. What musicians were those who composed the sublime masses which raised souls to heaven, in which the music consisted entirely in a simple phrase of the chant in an artless and even popular air, but which, directed by all powerful harmony to suit the different parts of the mass, could express so many various passions ! At the "kyrie," those of submission and pity ; at the "gloria in excelsis," those of admiration ; at the "passus," suffering ; at the "resurrexit," joy ; at the "agnus Dei," gratitude and peace. These were the inspirations of men in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a Dufai de Chimai, a Binchois de Paris, an Ockeghem of Bavaria, a Leteinturier of Nivelles, a Josquin of Cambray. These great musicians of the school of Cambray, instructed all the north of France. Artificial skill is not art.

The moderns, as a German philosopher remarks, "have cultivated more and more the luxury of harmonic accompaniments and instrumental concord, but only to promote the phantastic interest of a confused entertainment. The best judges sigh after the simple elevation of the ancient style, and recognize their chief masters in the first composers of the old simple harmonies of the Church."† Under the inspiration of faith, art was a great and holy thing. It was the reflection of God. It was the invisible world, the soul world. Palestrina and Mozart composed figured music equal in solemnity and feeling to the noblest tones of the Gregorian chant. They created melodies which should never be sung excepting on one's knees : the beautiful simplicity of the ancient Church chants so struck Pur-

\* Stromat. VI. 11.

† Fries. 241.



cell when he began to study them, that he exclaimed, "surely this must have been composed at the gates of heaven, where is such melody, as but to hear, for highest merit were an ample meed."\* Under the influence of Catholicism, poetry and music sent forth sounds such as the ear of man had never before heard. Sooth no tongue can be adequate to give an idea of the impression produced by the plain song of the choir. It is full of poetry, full of history, full of sanctity. While the Gregorian chant rises, you seem to hear the whole Catholic Church behind you responding. It exhales, says Genérout, a perfume of Christianity, an odor of penitence, and of compunction, which overcome you. No one cries how admirable! but by degrees the return of those monotonous melodies penetrates one, and as it were impregnates the soul; and if to these be added personal recollections a little sad, one feels one's self weep, without ever dreaming of judging, or of appreciating, or of learning the airs which one hears. In respect to art, one may pronounce without hesitation, that men such as Æschylus describes, who never in their hands bear the olive branch, having lost the faculty of prayer, the thrilling emotion in presence of the Father and Creator of the world, who, in short experience nothing but ordinary sensations when they hear the chants of the Church, must be degraded beings, insensible to the magnificence of nature, deaf to the nightingale or to the murmur of the woods, dead to poesy and to music, susceptible of no enthusiasm (man must desire something with ardor), but for objects disgusting and absurd.

Organs, whether hydraulic or pneumatic, were nearly the only instruments used in the churches in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all others being rejected in consequence of abuse and the fear of theatrical effect.† Some writers, among whom was our *Ælred of Rievaulx*,‡ complained of excess in the use of organs, though in the same age, *Peter the Venerable*, of *Cluny*, was defending the use of them against the *Petrobrusians*. The sacred Psalmist had expressly desired men to take up the harp and the cymbal, which judgment was more than sufficient to counterbalance the opinion of isolated philosophers. *St. Augustin* had lamented the blindness of the *Manichæans* in rejecting sacred music, saying, "that they knew not these medicines, and that they rage against the antidote by which they might be healed." The first organ which appeared in Europe was sent as a present by *Constantine Copronymus*, to *Pepin*, King of France, in the year 757. This was placed by him in the church of *St. Corneille*, at *Compiègne*. The secret of the construction of these steam organs is now entirely lost. The first organ on the present principle which was seen in the west, was that which *Louis-le-Débonnaire* placed in the church of *Aix-la-Chapelle*. It is an organ of this kind which is mentioned in the annals of *Fulda*, in the year 828. At the close of the ninth century many skilful organ builders were drawn to Rome by Pope

\* Dante, *Par.* XIV.

† Gerbert de *Cantu Sacra*, Tom. II. 99.

‡ *Specul. Charitatis*, Lib. II. cap. 23.

John VIII. In the tenth century, an organ of this description was placed in the Abbey of Westminster. Walafrid Strabo, describing the church of Aix-la-Chapelle, mentions a surprising instance of the effect of the wonderful organ which was in it ; for he says, that a woman expired through rapture and surprise at the sweetness of its sound.

“Dulce melos tantum vanas deludere mentes  
Cœpit, ut una suis decedens sensibus, ipsam  
Femina perdiderit vocum dulcedine vitam.”

This organ was made by George, a priest of Venice and by a Count Baldric. So delicious and astonishing was the music of organs and flutes, at the consecration of the monastic church of Cava, near Salerno, which was conducted with the utmost pomp, that what between the harmony and the sweet odors which were continually burning, the Serene Duke Roger, and all the people present, thought themselves on the very borders of heaven, as is attested by the chronicle in the archives of that house.\* In the tenth century, organs used to be supplied from Italy, as appears from the epistles of Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. The organ in the church of Brunswick was made by Arnold, a priest of the order of St. Francis, and that in the monastery of Trudbert, in the Black Forest, was made by Conrad Sittinger, a Benedictine monk of St. Blaise. As these instruments were made by religious men, so were they chastely touched by their pious and master hands.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was the custom to place the organ in the choir ; but in the fifteenth century it was deemed preferable to remove them to the western extremity of the nave. The expression of golden mass, “aurea missa,” which occurs in the books of the middle ages, implied a mass which was celebrated with extraordinary magnificence. This used to last three or four hours, in consequence of the music.† Of these solemnities, Dante is reminded when borne along by Beatrice over the waters of Lethe, and led to the symbol of our Saviour :

“The blessed shore approaching, there was heard  
So sweet by, ‘Tu asperges me,’ that I  
May not remember, much less tell the sound,”‡

alluding to the prelude of scattering the holy water, which usage has been always in the Church from apostolic tradition,§ following the example of Elijah the prophet, who is recorded to have mingled salt with water, that with this infusion the bitter fountains might be converted into sweet.|| Admirable was the adaptation of the different strains to the successive stages of the sacred mystery. Rupertus says, that the gradual used to be sung in lugubrious tones by men, and that this was

\* Italia Sacra, VII. 368.

† Gerbert de Cantu Sacra, Tom. I. 354.

‡ Purg. XXXI.

§ Joan. Devot. Lib. II. tit. VIII. § 1.

|| Hugo de St. Victor de Sacramentis, Lib. II. P. IX. c. 2.

followed by children singing in a sweet and joyous manner the Allelujah in a continued strain, protracting a short word, as it is not strange that the human voice should fail in speaking, where the mind does not suffice for thinking. This was so ordained, he says, to express the consolation which awaited mourners according to the sentence, "Beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur;" for this joyful Allelujah carries away the astonished mind, and directs it to that place where will be always life without death, and day without night. The sequence was that breathing or protracting of short words to denote a joy which was greater than one could express. Hence in the ancient sequences, we find unknown words, because, as Cardinal Hugo says, the manner of praising God in our country is unknown to us. But the proses sung before the Gospel, which date from the tenth century, were also called sequences, because the Gospel followed them. The music at the offertory continued while the oblations were received, and until the "Per omnia sæcula," was chanted by the priest. The Mixolydian song of the preface, which shall be sung long as time endures, is the same as what is found in the most ancient monuments. After the "Sanctus," the choir, or as it was sometimes called, "the school," was silent. This custom prevailed in the time of St. Chrysostom, for he says, that at the consecration all was silence, πολλή ἡσυχία, πολλή σιγή. This is the moment when the priest is left alone at the altar, the deacon and sub-deacon falling back, to signify, as Durandus says, how the disciples forsook Christ and fled.\* "The silence which follows the 'Sanctus,'" says Stephanus Augustodunensis, "indicates the commemoration of the Passion;" and Rupertus says, "After the joyful acclamation of the people there follows the history of secret grief, which is a cause for profound silence. At the fraction of the Lord's body, the Agnus Dei, and the dona nobis pacem were solemnly sung by the choir, and at the communion the sweetest strains of hypolydian harmony were protracted, in order, as the writers of the middle ages say, that the minds of the people who were about to receive the Lord's body might be exalted and tranquillized: or according to the words of a manuscript of the tenth century, "that the faithful about to communicate may inhale, in harmony, him whom they receive within their lips, that they may remember, that he whom they feed upon as corporal food, was crucified dead and buried." For this cause the music continues, that so long as the people are receiving the celestial benediction, their minds, by the charm of melody, may be retained in a state of sweet imprisonment. Finally, the deacon was to chant the *Ite missa est*, in a wondrous and a melodious note, in order, as it were, with the last hand to impress on the hearts of the people the memory of what they had seen and heard.† What a profound sense does all this indicate of the reverence due to the celebration of those tremendous mysteries in which God has placed the fountain of all holiness?

Such then was the ecclesiastical music during the middle ages, till the commence-

\* Rationale, Lib. IV. cap. 34.

† Rupertus Tuitiensis de Div. Off. lib. II.



ment of its decline, which, according to the natural order of things was contemporaneous with the decline of faith and the introduction of the new opinions; for a change of manners necessarily superinduced a change in the style of music. In the fifteenth century a profane theatrical music began to be introduced into churches, which was censured by Pope Benedict XIV. in his encyclical letter in the year of the jubilee, and again in his works, in which he called upon all bishops to correct this abuse. Martin Gerbert, a Benedictine monk of the monastery of St Blaise, in the Black Forest, composed his great work on sacred music, expressly with a view to stem, if possible, this deplorable evil, which he laments in language of piety and good sense. This abuse of church music gave great scandal at its commencement, as may be seen in the writings of Cornelius Agrippa, Erasmus, and others. It arrived at such a height, that the fathers of the Council of Trent deliberated whether they ought not to abolish all music in the churches excepting the Gregorian. Satan seemed to have again crept into the paradise of man on earth, the house of God. The chants were left to profane untutored artists, who substituted a hypophrygian style, consisting of fanciful digressions and exaggerated bombastic flourishes for the ancient simplicity, the dignity of the priesthood, and the reverence of God. Anthems were sacrificed to exhibit the fantastic powers of vain men, who knew nothing of devotion, and who very often were persons who, by the canons, stood excluded from so much as entering the assembly of the faithful. False character, false expression, and frivolity, under the title of brilliant execution, became the prevailing vices of music. This Phrygian, or hypophrygian music, full of insolent grandeur, noisy, tedious, and abounding in insipid repetitions, adulatory and suited to unstable minds, indicated clearly enough the influence of the new spirit which had superseded the reign of faith and Catholic devotion, and might have made men desire even the Lydian strains of the ancients, which, though their music of pleasure had still, as we have before remarked, the character of sorrow and compassion.

The abuse of organs was strictly prohibited, though in more recent times it has outstript all bounds. St. Charles Borromeo prescribed that although the organ may be used in hymns, yet every verse is to be distinctly pronounced in the choir;\* that in like manner the credo was not to be performed alternately by the choir and by the organ, but that all of it was to be sung. At the Synod of Treves, it was required that the organ should be silent at the elevation; and according to the Synod of Cologne, one of the questions to be proposed by the visitors of churches was, "Whether the organ was silent at the elevation." Generally it was enjoined that no verses should be intercepted and no hymns mutilated by the organ. The pontifical chapel at Rome, to the present day, has constantly rejected the use of organs as have some ancient churches, such as that of Lyons, and some religious orders, such as that of the Carthusians.

\* Concil. Mediol. I. p. 2. N. 51.

† Concil. Rhemense, an 1564

Sweet and intellectual was the harmony of youthful and aged voices joining in saintly chorus, worthy to be of angels heard; but sudden bursts of deafening noise, large floods of sound, mechanically sent forth in impetuous streams, would seem less in accordance with the still small peaceful voice of heaven.

---

## CHAPTER V.



WE have seen the importance ascribed to music generally by the great philosophers of the middle age: but let us now attend to what they deliver in its praise, when directed in particular to enhance the solemnity of the ecclesiastical offices.

"It is good," says St. Bernard, "to glorify God with hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs. The church chant rejoices the minds of men, refreshes the weary, invites sinners to lamentation; for although the heart of secular men may be hard, yet immediately when they hear the sweetness of psalms, they are converted to a love of piety." Dante seems to express this when he describes his hearing in purgatory the strains of dulcet symphony:

—————"Then the ice  
Congealed about my bosom, turned itself  
To spirit and water, and with anguish forth  
Gush'd, through the lips and eyelids from the heart."\*

St. Isidore of Spain speaks to the same effect, recommending music, that those who are not moved to compunction by words, may be excited by the sweetness of melody; for, he adds, quoting the words of St. Augustin, "all our affections have I know not what certain occult connection with diversity or novelty of sounds;" and St. Thomas proves the advantage of music on the same ground.† Of St. Adelard, abbot of Corby, it is related in Bollandus,‡ that whenever he used to hear a sweeter music in the divine office, he could not refrain from tears. St. Bernard relates that St. Malachy used often to say how greatly he was delighted by the chant which he heard in the monastery of Clairvaux. For even in these austere houses of penitence the graces of music were cultivated and appreciated. In the chronicle of the monastery of St. Trudo, it is related how Guntram, when first admitted as a youth into the choir, on the night of the conversion of St. Paul, filled the whole community with astonishment, unmixed with envy, at the sweetness and

\* XXX.

† 2. 2. 9. 91. Art. 2.

‡ T. I. Jan. diem XI.

power of his voice ; and with what humility he stood forth, at the command of the abbot, to sing the response which belonged to the office of another, who was of high dignity, which he executed with such power that the abbot, immediately after the office, appointed him to the second place in the choir.\* “The reading and meditation of the Scriptures, and the devout chant of psalmody,” says Richard of St. Victor, “strengthen the mind and render the weak firm.”† Vain is the censure and most shallow the judgment of the moderns, when they say that the poor cannot understand the regular offices. “When men hear sacred song,” says St. Thomas, “although they may not understand the words which are sung, yet they understand for what purpose they are sung, namely, to praise God, and this is sufficient to excite devotion.”‡ That ignorance of the poor can hardly be so great an evil, since Dante describes his having experienced it in paradise :

“Unearthly was the hymn which then arose:  
I understood it not, nor to the end  
Endured the harmony.”

And in fact, who has not marked the profound impression which the solemn tones of the Gregorian chant make upon the multitude in Catholic lands ? —the mystic joy with which it is sung by children, like holy innocents, and by old men, who have in their looks an expression which seems to tell that they know what takes place in paradise ? It is not by learning that men can qualify their souls for the reception of that heavenly peace which this holy song visibly inspires. Truly the words of David, thus loudly and articulately announced in the majestic Latin of the vulgate, seem an unearthly voice, teaching the wisdom of the eternal ages. Each word makes every heart vibrate as it unfolds the thousand mysteries of human thought, and the secrets of the conscience of man. How this divine voice enables us to see from on high and without fear, all the shocks which make weak mortals tremble, and which drag so often to the abyss, individuals and nations ! Oh, who is not moved by the oracular sentence of the psalmist ? Amidst the regrets, the agonies, the discouragements of life, who has not felt the power of that great voice which speaks in the depth of night, which touches and which consoles ? These Latin psalms and hymns, so sweetly and solemnly sung in the daily offices of the church, in which all classes, joined, diffused a complete tone and spirit through society in the middle ages ; so that the spirit of the psalms, and the spirit of the Gregorian song, became the spirit of the times. It is one thing, as the character of modern ages can testify, to read these things in a library, and it is quite another to hear them announced in majestic strains under the holy vaults of those churches which no one that has a heart can ever enter without veneration and trembling.

\* Apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. II. 661. † In Cantica Cantic. c. II. ‡ Serm. 2. 2. 9. 91. Art. 2.



The most familiar office was always new, for the events of the world and the vicissitudes of each man's fortune, every day throw a fresh light upon the words of this eternal wisdom, so that their profound sense seemed never exhausted, but was continually receiving further illustration by the crimes and follies, by the calamities and by the virtues of men; for in the psalms every thing is foreseen and set at rest on its true foundation, even down to the calamities and sophisms of the time we live in. Homer says of his hero, "He was suffering cruel wounds from a diseased heart, but he found a remedy, for sitting down beneath a lofty rock, looking down upon the sea, he sang as follows."\*—If the aspect of rocks and the sound of the waves could inspire consolatory thoughts and prompt a cheering song, what would he have found in our churches had their reviving oracles been heard?

When Francis I. was made prisoner in the park of the Carthusians at Pavia, he desired to be conducted into the church, when the monks at that moment singing Tierce, were chanting the verse, *Coagulatum est, sicut lac, cor eorum; ego vero legem tuam meditatus sum.* The king, disposed to a solemn feeling by his misfortunes, joined them in repeating the next verse. "*Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas.*" O genuine glitter of Eternal Beam, with what sudden force dost thou enlighten the darkness which resteth upon the uncertain and intricate ways of mortal life, pregnant with delusive phantoms!

What counsel, what consolation for humanity amidst its unnumbered woes, in the constant recurrence of those holy psalms, sung by the church, day and night! For what lesson of wisdom and patience, and heroic virtue, did they not teach? Did they not inculcate, as St. Basil says, "the magnificence of fortitude, the exact severity of justice, that temperance, so venerable even in its aspect, the perfection of prudence, the form of penance, the measure of patience and every kind of good?† To observe with what care the profound sense of the different parts of the ecclesiastical office was explained by the doctors of the middle ages, we need only refer to the remarks of Hugo of St. Victor, on the song of the magnificat, where he shows that it is not without great reason that it is sung with such peculiar veneration by the church.‡

"In the book of Psalms," says St. Ambrose, "there is a medicine of salvation for the human race: the psalm is the Benediction of the people, the praise of God, the voice of the Church, the confession of faith, the full devotion of authority, the joy of freedom, the cry of rapture; it mitigates anger, it banishes care, it alleviates sorrow, it hails the birth of day, it attends also its decline, it sanctifies the stillness of night. The apostle commands women to keep silence in the church, but they may chant the psalm with praise. This is sweet to every age and becoming to both sexes; this old men sing and forget their infirmities; this young men sing and commit no intemperance; youths sing the psalm without danger to their innocence, and maidens without disparagement to their modesty. Children love it,

\* II. VI.

† Præf. in Ps.

‡ Annot. Elucid. Alleg. in Marcum, Lib. III.

and it even fills infants with admiration. Kings and emperors sing with their people, because the psalm is profitable to all.”\*

Hugo St. Victor, in a golden little book on the mode of prayer, refutes the objection of those who would deny the fitness of the divine offices, on the ground of their not being composed exclusively in the deprecatory form. “Some,” he says, “are accustomed to ask why, when we wish to pray God for ourselves or others, we sing certain psalms, which neither contain words of petition nor have any relation apparently to our wants,—and moreover, use other parts of Scripture as a prayer, though they have no form of supplication or connection with our state; what advantage arises then from using words which express nothing of what we ought to ask from God? what skills it to sing, ‘Quare fremuerunt gentes,’ or ‘Attendite, popule meus?’ Is it not ridiculous to fancy that we pray when we sing such things?—This is what they say: but whoever diligently considers the nature of prayer, will easily discern how such words avail. This kind of prayer is often found more efficacious than that in which we manifestly and explicitly declare our wants. For there is this difference between supplicating man and God—that man cannot know our necessity unless he be informed of it; whereas God knows it before we ask. Man, therefore, must be informed by our narration; but in prayer to God, narration is unnecessary. Therefore, to speak briefly, when we praise God, whatever be the words used, however prolix, what else do they express but this one thing—that adoring we love him, and that loving we adore him? Similarly, when we treat of our misery before him, whatever be the words, and however prolix, what do they express but that from our heart, we seek his mercy, and place all our confidence in it? No parts of the Scripture are to be counted alien from the office of prayer, since, whether by insinuation, or inference, or entreaty, or announcement, all parts can infuse the affections of virtue, by means of which we shall pray more effectually than by the mere words of prayer. And who can enumerate all the virtues of the Psalms? Who can number those ignited compunctions of holy affections with which the mind that uses them is kindled in prayer, when the most grateful sacrifice to God is offered upon the altar of the heart?”†

We have already had incidental proof that in the early as in the middle ages, the multitude joined in the choral song of the church.—

“Intonet omnis homo cantica sacra Deo,”

is the line of Cosmas Materiensis, in his Poem entitled “The Passion of the Holy Martyrs,” dedicated to Gregory, the monk of Nonantula, and after seven hundred years, discovered among the ancient manuscripts of that abbey.‡ The people joined in the Psalmody of the clergy in primitive times.§ St. Cæsarius of Arles

\* S. Ambros. Præf. in Psalm.

† Italia Sacra, Tom. I. 3.

‡ De Modo Orandi Libellus.

§ Gerbert, de Cantu Sacra, Tom. I. 158.

compelled the laity to join with the religious in singing in the church the divine office, the psalms and hymns, the proses and antiphons: and in the second Council of Vasens, he entreated the people to assemble in the church at matutinal vigils, tierce, sext, and nones. In his sermons he exhorts the faithful, that, "despising the bitterness of the world, they would repair to the church, where they may receive the sweetness of Christ." Fortunatus says of St. Germain, Bishop of Paris,—

"Pontificis monitis clerus, plebs psallit et infans."\*

"My brethren," says St. Ephrem, "be assiduous in repairing to the places of our assemblies, whether during the night or at sun-rise, or during the day; whoever you be, of whatever rank, of whatever sex, of whatever condition, hasten to assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries."† Not only clerks, but also laymen, used to meet daily to assist at the divine office,‡ unprevented by the hours of the secular life. St. Gregory Nyssen relates in the life of his sister, St. Macrina, that after supper and a familiar conversation with his sister, he went to the church to return thanks to God at the vesper service—for every one used to go to the church at that hour, which the Greeks called ἐπιλύχνιος. The English Fathers of the Council of Cloveshoe, in the eighth century, required the faithful laity to assist at the divine psalmody in the church. They call it a medicine for the soul; and they add, "Although some one may be ignorant of the Latin words, yet he should supplicantly refer the intention of his heart to those things which are to be asked of God. And after the offices, such a person ought to pray secretly, in Saxon, for mercy and remission of his sins, and for the repose of the dead."§ The early canons required the faithful to assist at vespers as well as at mass. In one church at Lugano I observed it was a custom for laymen to go into the choir, and sing the canonical hours like monks. In Verona there were five oratorios, where many youths used to assemble on festivals to recite the hours of the Blessed Mary, after which the Gospel would be explained to them by a priest.||

Young women, in the castles of our ancestors, used to follow the advice of St. Jerome, when he requires that a daughter should recite the hours of matins, tierce, sext, nones, and that with lighted tapers she should offer the vesper sacrifice.¶ Indeed the intention of the Church is sufficiently seen in the indulgences which she bestows on all the faithful who assist at matins and lauds, and at the first and second vespers, as also at the lesser hours of Christmas, and Corpus Christi.\*\* At the consecration of the Church of St. Mary at Ferentinum, in the year 1191, the office began in the evening, at which assisted a great multitude of laics as well as clergy from Campagna and the Maritime Provinces. The people remained without the church during the night, watching the relics which were under illumi-

\* In Lib. II. Car. 101. † Serm. IV.

§ Can. 27. || Italia Sacra, V. 646.

†† Urban V. 1264, Martin V. 1429.

‡ Joan. Devot. Instit. Canon. Lib. III. tit. iv. 1.

¶ Epist. LVII.

\*\* Sixt. V. Bref. 1586.



nated tents, and singing "Hæc est vera fraternitas." On all sides a song, and a jubilation of laymen and of women, never ceased throughout the whole night.\*

In one of the Capitularies which Dacherius brought to light after lying in dust for more than eight hundred years, we read as follows :—"It is to be intimated, that the appropriate responses should be said to the sacerdotal salutations ; for not only clerks and priests, dedicated to God, should offer the response, but all the devout people ought to answer with consonant voice." † By several councils in the time of Charlemagne it was decreed that "a laic in the church should repeat the psalms and responses, but not the allelujah." ‡ The people, as we see in Catholic countries at present, knew the psalms by heart. "Facile psalmi memoria retinentur," says Nicetius, "si frequenter psallantur. In psalmis Christi sacramenta cantantur." § An affecting instance of this knowledge is presented in the history of Spain. When the Catholic army under Ferdinand and Isabella entered Moclin in solemn state, with the standard of the cross borne in the advance, they were accompanied by a band of priests and friars, with the choir of the royal chapel, chanting the hymn "Te Deum Laudamus." As they were moving through the streets in this solemn manner, every sound hushed excepting the anthem of the choir, they suddenly heard, issuing as it were from under ground, a chorus of voices, chanting the words, "Benedictum qui venit in nomine Domini." The procession paused in wonder. The voices were those of Christian captives, who were confined in subterraneous dungeons. The heart of Isabella was greatly touched : she ordered the captives to be drawn forth from their cells ; and then these poor creatures came forth, wasted by hunger, half naked, and in chains. Many of them were brave knights who had been wounded and made prisoners in the defeat of the Count of Cabra.

It must be acknowledged that this familiarity of the people with ecclesiastical offices, is a fact in the history of the middle ages of which many modern readers may not have been prepared to hear : for undoubtedly, in latter times, after so long a period has elapsed since the removal of the blessed source of light and warmth, when the public mind and manners have been so estranged from the supernatural tone of faith, when the only thirst recognized is for delusive streams, when the only provision made is for mere material interests,—men lose all personal acquaintance with the sublime and beautiful liturgy of the church ; and in compliance with their weakness, the solemn proses, the venerable hymns, are either omitted altogether, or else passed over in haste, as something frivolous or obsolete, in which there is no interest taken. There remain but a few men, lovers of antiquity, in whose minds the idea of the divine office is mingled with a certain Vir-

\* Italia Sacra, I. 675.

† Capitulare Ahytonis Episcop. Basiliensis III. Spicileg. Tom. VI.

‡ Concil. Mogunt. c. 9. Capitul. 49. 1. 5. Capitul. 136. Heraldi Turon. 10. c. 105, p. 7. Burchard, c. 87. 1. 8.

§ Nicetius Episcop. de Psalmidiæ Bono apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. III.

gillian sadness, as if it were a thing that had been ; and who cannot but feel in some degree the affliction of the prophet when he cried, "How is the gold obscured, the best color changed !" " *Dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum.*" But some estimate may be formed of what existed in ages of faith, from what we find in countries wholly Catholic at present, where is still fulfilled the prayer of the church in the benediction of the paschal candle—that in which she desires that her courts may resound with the great voice of the people. Mabillon speaks of many secular men, kings and nobles, who used, like Alfred and St. Louis, to recite the Breviary every day.\*

The young and old, the poor and rich, persons of both sexes and of all conditions, used to know these compositions by heart, and would love to return to them with the course of the ecclesiastical year, and to sing them with the utmost fervor, uttering so ready and so cordial an "Amen," as plainly spoke a personal and profound conviction of their justice. In fact, for many natures, the soul being imbued with the melody of the different Catholic hymns, psalms, and proses, was thought to be an essential part of education, and almost as important as a knowledge of the catechism ; for, as the ancients held that it was necessary to be a musician to understand the *Timæus* of Plato, so it seemed that, without a knowledge of music, the philosophy of the Catholic Church could not be understood. The truth is, that with our fathers domestic or patriarchal had not superseded Catholic and Christian manners ; the dividing and appropriating spirit had not destroyed that of diffusion ; men had not become so formed to habits of savage ferine seclusion as to make their hearths their altar ; the entertainments, the conversations of their domestic circle, were not dearer to them than the public offices of religion ; the festival had not yielded to the banquet, nor the benediction to the amusements of evening society. The churches being the assemblies most generally and dearly loved, careful and curious provision was made for the edification of the laity, by maintaining the solemn offices unmaimed, and by celebrating them as the church prescribed. In those grave times, when men deeply felt the utter incompatibility of reverence with levity, offices, however rapidly recited, were not mutilated or passed over in an inarticulate and confused manner. For no man, vested in sacred or any public dignity, could then have been accused of forming an exception to the general character of the human race, as we find it designated by Homer, when he speaks of *μερόπων ἀνθρώπων*. The words read by the priest for all were, as Mabillon observes, to be pronounced aloud, that those who assisted could hear them.† In places the farthest removed from centres of faith and fervor, the offices were still celebrated according to the universal custom of the church—for it was the desire of the holy and fervent, not that of the scornful and indifferent, which was consulted during the middle ages ; on account of which judgment, let no one attach blame to former guides, since it was an evidence of

\* Præfat in VI. Sæcul. Bened. 6.

† De Studiis Monast.

their wisdom to reject the policy that would require things to be reduced to the lowest standard, in order to please the weakest. To prove this, we need only observe how the Creator himself deals with men; for the beauty and magnificence of the natural world, which are also a sacred scripture, or a kind of holy office, are not proportioned to the capacities of children, but it is only as men approach to highest cultivation of which their intelligence is susceptible, that they can fully appreciate them. By adhering uniformly to the Roman offices, the strong were supplied with the nourishment appropriate to the wants of their intelligence, without neglecting the interests of the weak; for besides that their particular wants could easily be supplied, it was well known that they are always attracted and pleased by meeting with what contains more than they can fully master, in the same manner as children are ravished at the words and voice of nature. It is not merely the expert swimmer who loves to behold the ocean stream; children too are delighted when they look down upon its profound abyss, and listen to its foaming tide. So do the humble and illiterate contemplate with awe the mystic solemnities of the church, and in an ecstasy of the most sweet imprisonment, listen to her lofty song.

In conformity with these principles, the divine offices were not merely celebrated in cathedrals and monasteries, but also in all churches, from the sixth century. The canons of the Council of Lyons, in the year 475, commanded clerks who should be in villages to assist at matins. It was decreed in the year 787, in England, by a council, that every church should discharge its course of canonical hours with reverence; and King Edgar, in the tenth century, decreed that the bells should be tolled at the regular hours to give notice to the people. The same customs prevailed in France,—“so far,” adds Mabillon, “were the laity of those ages from considering it a proof of great religion to hear a mass on days of obligation.”\* In fact, so habituated were the laity to find consolation and assistance in the regular offices of the church, that when, to meet the exigencies of evil days, a new order arose, illustrious for the sanctity and learning for its members, but so instituted as to be obliged to abandon their public celebration for active combat, the fact of its having churches without choirs was adduced as serious charge against it; and that, not by the religious of the ancient orders who adhered to them, but by secular magistrates and lawyers, speaking in the name of the lay society.†

St. Cæsarius, of Arles, on account of the number of laymen who used to come to matins and to complin, used to recite homilies and passages from the sacred Scriptures and from the passions of the martyrs. From the ninth century we find, in the books of every age, that the acts of St. Stephen, which according to the Roman ritual, were alone read at mass, are given in the vulgar tongue; for, after having been read in Latin, they used to be sung in the vulgar language to the people.‡ It is a favorite opinion with those who feel no regret for the aban-

\* *Disquisit. de Cursu Gallicano.*

Gerbert, *de Cantu, Sacra.*, I. 390.

† *Pasquier Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 44.*



document of ancient discipline, that the devotional assiduity of men in the churches in the middle ages, was not combined with spiritual piety, or the habit of mental prayer. On referring, however, to the books of that time, we find this opinion has no other foundation but the abuse to which the best institutions are always liable. Constant allusion is made to the maxim of St. Augustin, “Non clamans sed amans cantat in aure Dei.” It was the edict of the blessed Benedict, “Sic stemus ad psallendum ut mens nostra concordet voci nostræ. Non in clamosa voce,” saith he, “sed in puritate cordis et compunctione lacrymarum nos exaudiri sciamus.” \*—“Prayer is of the heart, not of the lips,” says Hugo of St. Victor; † who, on the other hand, shows elsewhere that the psalmody and long offices of the choir are not on that account to be blamed, but to be animated with the fervor of internal love. ‡ The remembrance of having pronounced one verse without a firm attention during the office of matins, upon which he was then meditating in the church, according to his custom, after singing it with the clergy, was sufficient to induce Raynaldus, Archbishop of Ravenna, to recommence it from the beginning; which devout exercise detained him till the break of day. This was in the beginning of the fourteenth century. §

“In the ecclesiastical song, we do not regulate our judgment by the rules of the theatre,” says Cardinal Bona, following St. Jerome; “so that if there be any child with an indifferent voice, yet if he has good works, he is a sweet singer before God.” “Alas!” cries St. Augustin, “quam multi sonant voce, et corde muti sunt! Cantat Deo, qui vivit Deo.”

The celestial music consists in the contemplation of God, in exultation of mind, and in immortality of body. “Neither sweet music,” says the wise Ascetic, “nor hymns, nor holy books, nor beautiful treatises, nor the presence of good men, nor of devout brethren, can profit much when we are deserted by graces, and left to our own poverty.” “The prayer of the mouth,” says Louis of Blois, “is like the straw; and that of the heart is the grain. These two joined together are favorably heard by God.” || Another spiritual writer, exhorting the novices, when assisting at the divine offices, to cherish the most fervent devotion, in imitation of the angelic hierarchy, adds, “For all acts, if viewed of themselves, separated from elevation of mind, are like dead bodies lying on the ground; but if that spirit of life, which the mind can receive from God, begins to blow, then instantly they rise, and declare the glory of God.” ¶ We read in the canons of Crodogang, that “the singers must be humble and devout men,” “quorum melodia animos populi circumstantis ad memoriam amoremque cœlestium non solum sublimat verborum, sed etiam suavitate sonorum, quæ dicantur erigat.” \*\*

The most express and minute rules were given to regulate the external behav-

\* In Regul. c. 20, 52.

† De Anima, Lib. III. cap. 29.

‡ Annot. Elucid. Allegor. in Matthæum, Lib. II. 2.

§ Italia Sacra, I. 383.

|| Instit. Spirit. c. 8.

¶ P. Joan. a Jesu Maria Instruct. Novehorum, III. 1.

\*\* Crodogangi Regula Canonic. cap. 50, apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

ior in the churches. The canons of the Synod of Rishbach, in the diocese of Ratispon, held in the year 799, commence with these words, "In æde sacra ne strepunto; ne ambulanto; ante finem rei divinæ ne excedunto."\* The decrees of Crodogang descend to such particular details as to direct their censure against those loathsome guttural feats which the Easterns hold in horror, though at present in the most civilized nations of the West they are practised every where with effrontery. In this prohibition one discovers the gentle courtesy of the middle ages, for the words of the canon are, "ut infirmis mentibus non vertatur in nauseam."† Speaking unnecessarily in the Church subjected offenders to heavy ecclesiastical censures in the middle ages as well as in primitive times.‡

"To external reverence in the Church," says Cardinal Bona, "belong the keeping a watch upon the senses, the composition of the outward man, the tone of voice, gravity of manner, decency of habit, and the observance of all ceremony and prescribed rite; that the knees be bent, that we stand, sit, rise again, and incline as the occasion requires, that nothing may appear which can offend the beholders."§ Cassian,|| and St. Benedict¶ sanction the custom of sitting humbly and modestly in the church, when the occasion permits. In the decrees collected by Ivres de Chartres, we read that the clergy are to teach the people to kneel at mass during Lent; but that on Sundays and festivals no knee should be bent from eve to eve, but that all were to pray standing, according to ancient discipline attested by Tertullian,\*\* and St. Irenæus,†† and enforced by the Council of Nice,‡‡ which had never been interrupted in monasteries; Paul, the deacon, speaking of the monks of Monte Cassino, expressly mentions that they never bent the knee at the public office on Sundays, nor on any day between Easter and Pentecost.§§ The custom of resting one knee only on the earth is denounced in this collection, as having an indecorous resemblance with the act of the Jews who mocked our Lord.|||| In the tenth century, during the canon of the mass, man lay prostrate on the earth; but towards the period of the great outbreak of heresy in the fifteenth century, piety of men became so cold, that one bishop published ten days of indulgence to those who should remain at mass until the end, and his successor continued it to all truly penitent and confessed, provided they remained on their knees, from the elevation of the holy Eucharist to the elevation of the chalice: so languid was the piety of that time.¶¶ No one instructed in the philosophy of the ages of faith, was disposed to consider such injunctions as frivolous.

"Harmony in the body," says Plato, "appears always to be adjusted for the sake of sympathy in the soul."\*\*\* "They who pray," says St. Augustin, "fashion their limbs in accordance with the act of supplication when they bend their knees, or

\* *Germania Sacra*, Tom. II. 110. † *Reg. Can. cap. 15*, apud Dacher *Spicileg.* Tom. I.

‡ *Concil. Gradens.* § *De Div. Psal. 491.* || *Lib. II. c. 12.* ¶ *Cap. 9.* \*\* *De Orat. c. 23.*

†† *Fragm.* ‡‡ *C. 20.* §§ *Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Epist. ad Carolum Regem.*

|||| *Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars IV. c. 36.* ¶¶ *Mabillon, Præfat. in. V. Sæcul. Bened. § 6.*

\*\*\* *De Repub. Lib. X.*

extend their hands, or prostrate themselves on the ground, although their invisible will and intention of heart be known to God, and he does not want these signs that the human mind may be revealed to him, yet by them, man excites himself more to pray and groan humbly and fervently, and I know not how, while these movements of the body must have been preceded by a movement of the mind, nevertheless by means of the external and visible act, the internal and invisible is increased, and thus what preceded, is augmented by what follows."\* It was but natural that before the invention of printing, the use of books by the people in the churches should not have been general. In the fifteenth century, a prayer-book for the use of the people in England, entitled the Festival, resembling those at present in use, was printed by Wynkyn de Worde. The Psalter, the Gospels, the Acts, as also all the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, for the whole year, were translated into English by Richard, a religious hermit in the reign of King Henry II. The archives of the churches of St. Severin, at Bordeaux, of Senlis, Laon, and Rheims, make mention of missals which were enclosed in an iron cage attached to a pillar in the nave, so that the hand could enter through the bars to turn over the pages. Many of the laity who repeated the office, knew most of it by heart; others had manuscript leaves to assist their memory. When the Emperor of Germany took leave of King Charles V. of France, at Paris, Christine de Pisan says, that he begged that he would give him one of his books of hours, saying, that he would pray to God for him. The king presented him with two, one little, the other great.† The prayer-book of Charles-le-Chauve, which with his Bible, is in the king's library, at Paris, is bound richly, covered with precious stones and with bas-reliefs in ivory of the most curious workmanship. In the chapel of the Castle of St. Ouen, belonging to the knights of the Order of the Star, founded by King John, there was a book for their use in French prose which is noticed in the catalogue of the library of Charles V.‡ In the library of Plasantia, may be seen the Psalter of the Empress Engelberg, wife of Louis II., written with her own hand in the year 847.

How early the use of devotional manuscripts prevailed in secular life may be found attested even on the ancient sepulchres, as on that affecting tomb which faces the monument of Dagobert, in the Abbey of St. Denis, where a young princess is represented in the attitude of death, with her poor little book of hours pressed against her bosom. The rosary, however, was the most ordinary devotion of the people in a devout and meditative age, when men had leisure for contemplation. This was not instituted by the Venerable Bede, as the English word beads has led some to suppose, for in the English councils the Latin word *beltedus* is used, which Ducange derives from the Saxon word, belt. There is something which remarkably evinces the spirit of the middle ages in the advice which we find given

\* De Cura pro Mortuis.

† Livre de Faiz, &c. Lib. III. c. 45.

‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom III.



to assist men at their devotion and to nourish the fervor of their piety. The Church herself prays that what we cannot celebrate with worthy minds we may, at least, attend with humble service.\* "When cold in prayer," says one writer, "consider how many servants of God are then at their prayers, shedding tears of devotion in forest cells and monasteries, and in the basilica of the martyrs, and do you now in spirit join yourself to them."† To this refers also what St. Ignatius calls the prelude of composition of place, as when men were told to imagine themselves actually present at the different scenes recorded in the Gospel. In the history of Leopold, Archduke of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II. there is given an account of his private papers, in which he drew up certain rules for his devotions. In the manner of assisting at mass, he says, "At the Gospel, I will listen to the words as if they proceeded from the mouth of Jesus Christ and were addressed to me alone." Thee, too, Leopold, of Tuscany, among the worthies of antique days, let this humble page commemorate, whom in the church of the Annunciata, at Florence, I beheld on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin: for when at solemn mass the book of the Gospels was brought to thee after the deacon had read therefrom, lowly sinking on thy bended knees thou didst kiss it devoutly, and then with palms inverted hide thy face, at which moment I remarked some cheeks down which stole a tear. That going up to the offering at mass, was a solemn and impressive thing which the people in many places have been unwilling to abandon. St. Emanuel, bishop of Cremona, in the year 1170, celebrating mass, and refusing to receive the oblations of those who came up to the offering wearing long hair like women, the men who were rejected, retired to the door, and cut off their hair with their knives or swords, rather than suffer such a privation for its sake.‡ Similarly it was the basilica of St. Peter, at Spoleto, which was made to attest the solemn act of the citizens, who on giving themselves to the pontiff, cut off their hair and beards, being the first of the Longobards to renounce that ancient distinction of their race.§

The distribution of blessed bread among all who assisted at high mass, which each house in the parish used to offer in turn, was another ancient rite, originating in the eulogia, which was the surplus of bread offered by the faithful for the altar, that was blessed by the priest, and distributed to all who did not communicate, and to children.|| The names of the offerers were inserted in dyptychs and recited from the altar.¶ Thus Dagobert is related to have given many things to the churches in order that on Sundays and festivals his name might be inscribed in the book of life.\*\* We find the names of Otho the Great, and of his wife Adelheid, of Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, and of Otho's brother William, Archbishop of Mayence, of the sons of Otho, and of forty-four other persons, nobles and

\* Prayer of S. S. Perpetua and Felicitas.

† Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 605.

‡ Thomassinus de Vet. et Nov. Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. 14.

¶ Saga de Diptychis Veterum, cap. 4.

† Thom. à Kemp. Epist.

§ Ib. I.

\*\* Duchesne, Tom. I. Scripta Franc.

religious in the ancient diptych of the monastery of St. Maximin at Treves. In Italy where the young are so exquisitely formed and endowed with such a refined and spiritual look, having lines so beautifully penciled that their countenances resemble those of angels in the paintings of Guido the Bolognese, one must be often struck with the tender piety evinced by poor children in the churches: and methinks it explains somewhat of the middle ages to behold these innocents, with garments so rough, and figures so soft and delicate, praying by themselves with the utmost fervor and recollection. It appears that great care was employed in excluding from the churches whatever might distract the minds of the people; for which purpose there was a multitude of minor clerks employed who had not strictly orders. In early days, the danger of interruption from the pagans, made the porters of great consequence.

When Pope St. Cornelius was elected in 254, the Roman Church had forty-four priests and one hundred and eight ministers. The proportion of the latter increased since the time of Constantine, and for five hundred years the churches were magnificently served. By many decrees, as that of the Council of Salzburg, in the year 1386, the penalty of suspension was to be incurred by such of the clergy as failed in paying due attention to the condition of the vestments, ornaments, and sacred vessels of the altar.\* To preserve the Cathedral of Pientina in its original beauty, Pius II. its founder published a decree in the year 1362, pronouncing the severest censures on any one who should violate the whiteness of the walls and columns.† Fleury and Chardon remark that the saints of the early ages, in attending with such care to external things, were not occupied about trifles. They understood the importance of preserving the beauty of the place, the silence, decorum, order of the discipline, and the majesty of ceremonies. Services of this nature were not then delegated to vulgar hirelings of ferocious manners, but to spiritual persons in whom meekness sweetened duty. Women were never to approach the altar to discharge any ministry.‡ By the Council of Châlons in 650, as by many others, no one wearing arms was to presume to enter the church. “We who are always surrounded with the arms of legitimate empire,” says Theodosius the younger,” and who should be constantly attended by an armed company, nevertheless when about to enter the temple of God, leave our weapons outside.” The Council of Slengastad, however, admitted of one exception in favor of the king. At the time when the Normans were in military possession of the country, Count Rodulf, one of their chieftains, came to the Abbey of Monte Casino with the intention of taking the abbot prisoner, yet on entering the church he left his arms as usual, says the chronicle, outside, of which the servants of the abbey proceeded to take an advantage that could only be excused by the danger of their position.§ In like manner, when

\* German Sacra, Tom. II. 462.

† Italia Sacra, I 1179.

‡ Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars 11. c. 135.

§ Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, Lib. II. c. 71.

Desiderius, a young prince of Beneventum, came there with his company, we read that the servants were left outside the door, ostensibly for the sake of guarding the swords and horses, though in reality it was to provide for the escape of the prince, through a postern in the church, in order to accomplish his desire of embracing the monastic habit.\* When in the year of 1406, at Paris, some serjeants had seized during the divine office in the Church of St. Jacques de la Boucherie, a criminal who had retired there, the divine service instantly ceased, and interdicts were fulminated which were not loosened until the sentence of reparation had been passed. In the book before the last, we had occasion to revert to the law and custom of asylums, for in the middle ages, we read of men taking sanctuary where now they take vengeance. Who is not moved at hearing that in times of the greatest disorder and misery, there was always one city of refuge, which never beheld the horrid images of war, where no gentle loving spirit was constrained to recoil in terror :

τασβήσας χαλκὸν τ', ἡδὲ λόφον ἰπποχαίτην  
δεινὸν ἀπ' ἀκροτᾶτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας,†

where no one, however daring, was ever seen even to enter *κεκορυθμενός αἰθοπι χαλκῷ*; for the act of Philippe-le-Bel, who entered the Church of Nôtre Dame on horseback, on returning to Paris after his victory in Flanders, was like a sinister omen of future impiety, and only in character with the tyrant, who had pushed his sails into the temple and spared not even Christ's vicar in his wrath. The reverence due to the sacred mysteries was accurately stated and strictly maintained. It was reserved for the faithful of later times to behold in their sanctuaries the boasting of those who hate God in the midst of his solemnity—"Et gloriati sunt qui oderunt te in medio solemnitatis tuæ."‡ "Consider, my beloved," says St. Ephrem of Edessa, "with what fear those stand before the throne, who wait on a mortal king. How much more does it behove us to appear before the heavenly King with fear and trembling, and with awful gravity."§ "Here were," as St. Chrysostom says, "greater symbols than the holy of holies contained, for here was not the cherubim—here were not the urn and the manna, and the tables of stone, and the rod of Aaron, but the body and blood of our Lord."|| "Truly tremendous," he cries, "are the mysteries of the church—truly tremendous are our altars."¶

The custom of standing during the divine offices is indicated in the name given to the wooden recesses in the choir of collegiate churches, though at the lessons all were permitted to be seated, after the example of Christ among the doctors; and holy men speaking of this practice, remark the saying of Aristotle, that by sitting and resting the mind becomes wise.\*\* A very ancient inscription which was formerly on the steps of the pontifical chair in the Church of the Vatican, proves that

\* Id Lib. III. c. 2. † Il. VI. 469. ‡ Ps. xlii. § Paræn. XIX. ¶ In Ps. cxxxiii.

¶ Hom. 46. \*\* Physic. 7.



it was the custom at Rome, in remote times, as it still continues to be in many countries, for the men to be placed on one side of the church and the women on the other.\* Every emergency is provided for by canonists respecting the celebration of the Christian mysteries. If a priest in saying mass should drop dead or be taken ill, so as to be unable to proceed, and if this should happen before the consecration, the mass was not to be continued by another priest; but if it be after the consecration, the mass was to be finished by another priest, though he should not be fasting, in order that the mysteries might not be left imperfect; for the ecclesiastical precept which enjoins the fast was to give way to the necessity of completing the sacrifice. As the canon says, "Since we are all one in Christ, the diversity of persons forms no contrariety." If the church should be violated or polluted, before the canon, the mass was to be interrupted, if after it, to be completed. If the advance of an enemy, or the breaking in of a flood, or any ruin should occasion imminent danger, before the canon, the mass was to be suspended, if after the consecration, the priest was hastily to receive the body and blood. If an enemy of the Christian religion should threaten the priest with death, unless he break off the mass, the canonists said, that the priest was bound to continue, though at the risk of his life, whether it be before or after the consecration. Pope Gregory VII. being wounded on the head by an assassin, who favored King Henry, as he said mass on the night of Christmas, did not descend from the altar until he had finished the mass which he had begun. But there were some occasions when it was held necessary to break off the mass, even after the consecration, as when a dying child was to be baptized, or any one was to be confessed and administered being at the point of death, who otherwise might have died without the sacraments.†

On the festival of St. Michael, as the Christians were assembled in the Island of More, and St. Francis Xavier was at the altar saying mass, a violent earthquake came on in the middle of the sacrifice. The people in the utmost terror fled out of the church, but the saint remained at the altar and finished the sacred mysteries. The barbarians were lost in astonishment on beholding a man who remained immovable, while the rocks and the mountains trembled, and they judged him to be divine.‡ The Archduke Leopold of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II., being at his devotions in a church at Salsfeld, and the artillery of the enemy beginning to rage, and the balls to fly on all sides, he was warned of his danger, but he replied, "that no one could injure him while he was so near his God." In the Franciscan convent, at Clonmel, in the midst of the choir was the stately monument of Edmund Butler, Baron of Cahir, all of marble, with very curious figures and bas relievos. That baron being at high mass in the monastery, news was brought him that the Earls of Ormond and the Barons of Dunboine, his relations, were then

\* Pauli Aringhi *Roma Subterranea*, p. 117.

† Bened. XIV. de Sacrif. Missæ. sect. 2. 105—118.

‡ Bouhours, I. 203.

ravaging his lands. He was no way discomposed, but staid till the mass was finished, and then marching against the invaders, defeated them.\* Louis XII. on entering a church to hear mass, received a letter, which was known to contain news of great importance respecting the success of his arms. Nevertheless he would not open it until the sacrifice was finished. In these ages, men otherwise steeled against conscience were found impressed with such a reverence for the churches, that they shrunk from the thought of making them the scene of their crimes. When Verinna, one of the conspirators in league with Fiesquo, proposed to assassinate Andrew and Jannetin, Doria and Adam Centurione, while they were assisting at mass, the count instantly rejected the plan with horror, declaring that he would never consent, for the sake of any advantage, to commit such an outrage to the most holy mystery of religion. This fact is mentioned by the Cardinal de Retz. Who has not heard the surprising history relating how the Christian churches were respected even by the barbarous invaders of Rome, to which St. Augustin, with such eloquence alludes, in comparing them with the heathen temples, saying, *Ibi amissa, hic servata libertas: ibi clausa, hic interdicta captivitas*. The basilicas of Christ inspired ferocious barbarians with humility and piety, who then gave a new spectacle to the world?†

Having now taken a general view of the sacred offices in relation to history, in order to complete what we have begun, let us conceive ourselves present, and penetrating as it were into the crowd, let us cast a contemplative look upon the wondrous and the tender scene. Lo, what an assembly is here. This is the blessed vision of peace. It is here that the race of men seems amiable. It is here that we feel how near they are to God who thus showers down his mercy upon them in the midst of his temple. Yes, sweet is the air of temples to those who have endured the thirst of the Babylonian exile, to those who have wandered sufficiently long in the land of maledictions as to discover how tasteless are its fruits, and how void of perfume its most gorgeous flowers. At the first step on entering this garden of God, it is as if one emerged from a withering atmosphere to feel the healthful and delicious breeze of mountains. What a glow of charity suddenly transports the heart and revives the fancy, though joy and hope had before seemed dead. No distrustful, or malignant, or inquisitive looks cause you to feel yourself a stranger, for it seems to be here as it is in Paradise, where the blessed hail each new arrival, crying,—

———“Lo one arrived  
To multiply our loves.”‡

Unnumbered are the wretched men possessing lofty souls tortured by the feeling of isolation, and afflicted with unutterable anguish at the thought of remaining forever unknown. They thirst after society,—after communion with congenial intelligences. What society then can be found so amiable, so inspiring, so full of

Monast. Hiber. 277.

† De Civitate Dei, Lib. I. c. 4. 6.

‡ Dante, Par. V.

all consolation, and of all remedies for human misery as that of the faithful in the house of God? They wish to be entreated, and that their presence may be sought for, but what more noble invitations or more worthy of all acceptance can they receive than those which are made to all the faithful in a Catholic city when they are entreated to come, rich men and beggars, in such composed and seemly fellowship as would become the fair equality of the golden world, to honor the memory of some friend of God in the church which has invoked him? The feasts of secular luxury last but for a short season. In the divine temples there is an eternal festivity, for nothing there is celebrated that passes away, or that hath a shadow of change. Eternal is the festival in which, as St. Gregory says, we escape from our own mutability by beholding him who is immutable—"Mutabilitatem nostram transcendemus videndo immutabilem."\* "From that festivity," says a great author, "there is heard I know not what certain sweet song in the ears of the heart, provided the world doth not disturb it. This unearthly sound soothes the ear of him who walks in the courts of God, who considers the wonders of God in the redemption of the faithful; and it leadeth the stag to the fountains of waters. Nevertheless since as long as we are in the body we are journeying at a distance from the Lord, and that the corruptible body weighs down the mind, and terrene cares oppress it, if by desires sometimes we come to that sound, yet after a while by the weight of our infirmity we fall back to our accustomed sorrows. But there we shall always find that in which we can rejoice, although here there is never wanting that which causes us to mourn. And now transporting ourselves to the neighborhood of some church in the middle ages, behold what a multitude resorts thither. The bell sounding within the lofty tower like the Divine voice, calls many. Soon you see the humble crowd winding its way along the pious path. It is the poor orphan who spins as she walks; it is the blind man who feels his way with his stick; it is the timid beggar whose hand holds a rosary; it is the child who caresses each flower as he passes by; it is the old man who hastens with feeble steps;—youth and age are the friends of God."†

But ere we proceed further, let us listen to the solemn murmur of those bells which invite the faithful:—for though, in a former Book, we had occasion to speak of them, still one cannot refuse to return, and stand awhile, musing at their sound!

In the life of St. Loup, Bishop of Sens, we read, that when King Clothaire heard the bell of St. Stephen, he was so delighted with its tone, that he ordered it to be removed to Paris, where he might always hear it: and the bells of St. Saviour at Blois sent forth such harmony, that when everything else seemed to fail, they were found to soothe that profound melancholy to which Henry III. was subject.‡ In the chronicles of Italy, we have another example of attention

\* Hom. II. Lib. I. super Ezech.

† De la Martine *Harmonies Poétiques*, II. 192.

‡ Bernier, *Hist. de Blois*, 35



to the music of bells. The Countess Matilda Eurilla, while remaining at Ferrara, went to take the diversion of hunting, with spears and nets, in the woods near the Benedictine Abbey of St. Bartholomew. Imperceptibly the time passed, till the meridian hour found her exhausted with hunger and fatigue. The monks then came out, and with all benignity invited her to take refreshment, which she did not refuse. No sooner had she sat down to table than the bell from the tower emitted a dead and abrupt sound, upon which she asked how it came to be split, and why it had not been cast afresh, in order that it might give a clearer sound. The monks beginning to speak of the poverty of their house, she immediately took off her jewels and her gold spurs, which she presented to the abbot. The bells were afterwards called by the Italians the spur-bells, and a spur was engraven on the brass, with verses commemorating her pious liberality.\* The office of the bell used to be described in these lines:—

“*Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congrego clerum,  
Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro.*”

Inscribed on the bell were generally various solemn lines. Thus on one bell of the Cathedral of Strasbourg, you read—

“*Nuncio festa, metum, nova quædam, flebile lethum,*”

on another—“*O Rex gloriæ Christe, veni cum pace,*” on another—

“*Vox ego sum vitæ, voco vos ; orate, venite,*”

Each tone had often a distinct object to indicate. Thus there was the great and solemn bell exclusively for the high festivals of the Church. Of less magnitude was the bell of the Angelus ; the bell to announce the opening and termination of the fair ; the bell for the retreat ; the bell to announce the divine offices on ordinary occasions. That certain bells of the towers were sounded at the elevation, as well as other parts of the divine office, in order that the people without the church might be excited to prayer, can be collected from a letter of Ives of Chartres, to Matilda, Queen of England, thanking her for the present of bells to that church.† Never can I lose the memory of what I experienced under the dome of Florence, when one heard as if on all sides the indistinct moaning of that solemn bell. Dugdale relates that Athelwold, abbot of Abingdon, in the tenth century, made a wheel, which was filled with bells, which being sounded on the greater festivals, used to excite the devotion of the people. In many churches, as at Strasbourg, there was a different musical air executed by the bells three or four times each day, besides a peculiar harmony of joy for each of the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Celebrated were the bells of Freyburg in Brisgau ; of St. Stephen at Vienna, which tower was erected by Conrad Zaringgen in the twelfth century,—of Salzburg, Erford, Hamburg, Holm, Rouen, Lyons, Tours, Paris, and

\* *Italia Sacra*, I. 530.

† *Epist.* CXLII.

of many other places. It required the force of sixteen men to sound the great bell of Strasbourg, which measured twenty-two feet in circumference. In Italy there were bells weighing twenty-two thousand pounds.

But we are at the portal ; the space before which is entitled the Paradise, either from its intrinsic beauty or from its proximity to the courts of heaven,\* or from the bodies of the faithful reposing there, as before the church of Amalphi.† The whole ground too, as before the cathedral of Cefalu in Sicily, by the piety of Count Roger,‡ and in front of the noble church of Salerno, built by Robert Guiscard, was often deeply covered with holy earth, which had been brought from Jerusalem : and in many places, as at Nola, the whole basilica was surrounded with sepulchres, urns, and inscriptions, redolent of venerable antiquity. At the gate of the latter you read these lines—

"Siste gradum, quamvis properes, en siste, viator;  
Te cogat pietas, religioque loci.  
Quemque Augustinus, Paulinus, Bedaque libris  
Concelebrant, flexo tu venerare genu.  
Ingredere, at mundo corde, et simul excute plantas,  
Sanctorum quando corpora mille premas."

This inscription at the entrance of the cathedral of Bari in Apulia, admonished the stranger to imitate the humility of the holy men, Hælias and Eustachius, who had built and adorned that church, concluding thus :—

"His gradibus tumidis ascensus ad alta negatur,  
His gradibus blandis quærere celsa datur.  
Ergo ne tumeas, qui sursum scandere quæris,  
Sis humilis, supplex, planus, et altus eris."§

See these smiling children on the steps, these playful innocents, who serve in the temple. See too these devout widows, these humble men, who hasten to ascend ! Ah ! here must be the entrance to joy ; here we shall have renewed the peaceful beauteous dreams of youth, here we shall be reminded of the thoughts of our golden years. For we may remark that the Church, unlike all that belongs to the world, is never rendered by age different from what it was found to be at first. It is like a treasury, in which all the past joys of men are preserved. The innocence and delights of youth, the intellectual riches of maturity, are laid up in store here, safe and uninjured. No one as he grows old, becomes weary of it, but on the contrary, the human heart loves and venerates it, if possible, each day, more and more, for while it restores to the mind of man all the bloom and fragrance of his first years, all that gave joy to his youth, it presents to it in prospect the fulness of joy and pleasure for ever more. At the divine altar, the Catholic beholds and possesses whatever has rejoiced his soul in life : he sees the star by which

\* In Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Lib. II. c. 9. notæ.

† Italia Sacra, VII. 226.

‡ Sicilia Sacra, II. 813.

§ Italia Sacra, VII. 612.

he has steered through all the gusts and tides of the world's mutability.—But let us enter, passing with timid steps over the threshold; for underneath it often lies buried some humble pontiff, like Bartholomew Castelli, who caused his body to be placed before the greater door of his cathedral of Mazara, in order, as an inscription testified, that it might be trod upon by the feet of all,\* an instance similar to which we find at the church of St. James of the Spaniards, in Rome, where, through the same humble choice and desire of mercy, the body of Bartholomew de la Guera, Duke of Albuquerque, and Archbishop of Siponto, lies buried under the threshold.† Lo, what a crowd fills the holy place! This is the house of the Lord, founded on the tops of the mountains, and exalted above all hills; and all nations come to it, and say, “Glory be to thee, O Lord.”

We have many records attesting the fulfilment of these words from the history of the ages of faith. Apollinaris Sidonius describes the solemn vigil on the feast of St. Justus. “The procession was before light; a vast multitude was there of both sexes, which that capacious basilica could not contain.” St. Hugo VI. abbot of Cluny, was obliged to enlarge the church of the monastery, as it was not able to contain the crowds that resorted to it.‡ Great was the multitude which the festivals of the martyrs, in the first ages, drew from all parts, to the churches which contained their relics, when, as Theodoret says, our Lord had brought his dead into the room and place of the heathen gods, and instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus, were celebrated the festivals of Peter and Paul. St. Paulinus enumerates more than twenty cities and provinces of Italy, of which the inhabitants came every year with their wives and children, in the depth of winter, to honor the memory of one confessor, St. Felix, in the city of Nola. We may judge what was the concourse at Rome on the festivals of St. Hippolytus, St. Lawrence, and the Apostles; or at Tours, on that of St. Martin. “At Nola,” says St. Paulinus, “it is delightful to behold one city enclosing many cities, and such multitudes united by one vow. Thither came the people of Lucania and the Appulian youth, the Calabrians too, and they from joyful Campania, whom rich Capua and beauteous Naples encircle with ample walls,—they who cultivate the happy lands of Gales, whom powerful Atisia and mother Aricia send. Rome even rejoices to see her sacred precincts deserted for the honor of God, while far and wide the issuing multitude pursues the Appian way. Nor are the rough tops of the Latin mountains less thronged, as they whom lofty Præneste, whom festive Aquinum nourish, and whom ancient Ardea sends from its borders, repair to the festival. Thither hasten crowds also from Olive bearing Venafro; and the hard Samnites leave the mountain towers—

“*Vicit iter durum pietas, amor omnia Christi  
Vincit, et alma fides, animisque locisque rigentes  
Suadet acerba pati, simul aspera ponere corda.*

\* *Sicilia Sacra*, II.

† *Italia Sacra*, VII. 860.

‡ *Bibliothec. Clun.* 457.



*Una dies cunctos vocat, una et Nola receptat,  
Votaque plena suis spatiosaque limina cunctis,  
Credas innumeris ut mœnia dilatavit  
Hospitibus, sic Nola assurgit imagine Romæ.”\**

St. Gregory of Tours relates, that on the festival of the blessed martyr of the church of Brest, a clerk of the abbey of Limoges, coming to the festivity, such was the multitude of people, that he could not approach to the holy tomb, nor even enter within the church.† In the year 1500, one of the articles of the Jubilee at Rouen, requiring assistance at a solemn mass in its cathedral, that immense church could not contain the multitude, so that crowds in deep devotion knelt outside, and filled the adjoining streets.‡ St. Odo says that the church of St. Martin at Tours, though of immense size, was too small for the crowds that sought to enter, insomuch that the rails of the choir and the gate posts used to give way before them; and he adds, “*Quam devotam violentiam credo, gratam habet dominus ipse Martinus, ad exemplum videlicet Domini sui quem turbæ comprimebant.*”§

This judgment of the middle ages, according to which an importunate crowd was a sublime spectacle, as being a practical evidence, as well as a kind of repetition of the facts of the Christian history, has nothing to fear from a comparison with the general sentiment of the moderns on the same subject; at least where affectionate and philosophic minds are to determine the question. The haste of the shepherds and the air of the stable were not forgotten on these occasions in Catholic times; nor did any one disdain to find himself in contact with the devout multitude, which would assuredly, with the same importunity, have pressed upon Christ. Being at Loretto, on the festival of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, I could not penetrate within the Santa Casa until late in the evening of the second day, when being remarked by one of the guards, I was with charitable violence pulled through the more fervent throng. Some men come here to inquire and speculate about the origin of ancient traditions, but to me, who could not remain insensible to the intention of this vast multitude, so visibly impressed with the same tender and devout affections, marvellously foolish seem such pains. It was enough for me to meditate on what I felt and saw.

“The air of Paradise did fan the house, and angels officed all.”

Let us remark here what a charm must have been found in the variety of characters which composed this multitude. In modern times, after such a successive diminution of truths affecting both the spiritual and the material hierarchy of society, nothing can be more monotonous than an assembly of people. There are the rich, cuirassed in egotism, initiated in no other rites but those of Bacchus, bred up with the same feeling of disdain for every outward manifestation of piety and

\* Italia Sacra, Tom. VI. 248.

† Greg. Turon. Miracul. Lib. II. 28.

‡ Taillepie, Recueil des Antiquitez de Rouen, 230.

§ De Combust. Basil. Bibliothec. Cluniac. 146.

fervor : there are the poor, parked in from all observation or contact with the rich, thoroughly subdued and moulded into one form of servilely servile respect. But in ages of faith it was a very different picture. The boundless variety of graces was seen indicated in the members of the faithful fold. In fact, what do we still find in Catholic countries amidst the pious throng ? We find the simple hermit come from his woods, the shepherd from the mountains, the young and thoughtful clerk, the solemn religious man, the laboring youth, with joy and triumph in their looks,—all persons dissimilar in habits, in disposition of mind, in the cultivation and direction of their intelligence, and yet who have one centre and bond of union, the Church ; and one model, Jesus Christ.—“Non intrabit in eam aliquod, nisi qui scripti sunt in libro vitæ agni.” These words seem accomplished here, for before this altar, all who are present may be supposed, from their exterior appearance, to be either saints who have preserved their white baptismal robe unsullied, according to the solemn admonitions of the Church, their mother, or else penitents who have atoned, or who are atoning for having stained its purity. At times, indeed, may be discovered some awful figure, who seems moved, and yet unable to call on Heaven for mercy—one like those we read about in legendary tales, from whose eye no tear can fall, and at whose heart there seems to lie an icy coldness, unrelieved, though five thousand voices join to raise the holy hymn, and hearts are thrilled and eyes are filled by that full harmony. But remark well, no persons seem to have come here merely to be observed, or to comply with a mechanical habit. Thus there is a common office, but there are particular wants ; and therefore, while the priest chants aloud at the altar, the internal desire of innumerable hearts are sent up to heaven. As Pope Benedict XIV. remarks, the object of the secret prayers is beautifully expressed by the Church in the secret of the mass on the fifth Sunday after Pentecost “*Ut quod singuli obtulerunt ad honorem nominis tui, cunctis proficiat ad salutem.*” How deeply interesting is it in the assembly of a church in some vast metropolis, to detect the man of interior life, the devout contemplatist, the hermit, who on these occasions comes abroad to mix in the throng of men,—to see in the church the devout student, whom nothing but the office could tear from his books, the holy recluse, who may be looked for elsewhere in vain ! there he kneels, with hands crossed upon his breast, and eyes raised to the altar, as the spirit of Nino appeared to Dante,—

—— “Both palms joined and raised,  
Fixing its steadfast gaze toward the East,  
As telling God, I care for naught beside.”\*

Where he comes from, no one knows ; and when the office is at an end, he will be lost in the retiring crowd, and be seen no more !

What a solemn and moving spectacle is that of the devout female sex in the churches ! Dante had in his mind’s eye many a living image, familiar to those

who visit them, when he drew that touching portrait in the vision of Paradise :—

“Lo ! where Anna sits, so well content to look  
On her lov'd daughter, that with moveless eye  
She chants the loud *hossana*.”\*——

It is like a demonstration of the divinity which presides over all the Catholic offices, to mark the universality of that intense affection with which they are loved by women—those fairest and best of creatures, to whom God hath given intelligence on earth, who turn their steps, or at least their hearts, to the Catholic altar, whether in joy or sorrow, in sickness or in health, like the innocent child, who always runs thither for succor where he trusteth most.

If to behold the divine beauty of the human countenance be at all times sweet to minds contemplative, where can this pleasure be enjoyed so fully as in the church ! There raptures of love mixed with sorrow, at the solemn moment of communion, give a sublime expression to the countenance. That of joy, as has been acutely remarked by Gerbert, is seldom sublime ; for joy is so fugitive and false a thing, that it seems to communicate to the human face somewhat of the air of insanity : grief, on the contrary, almost always ennobleth the countenance. The instinct, however, of our primitive destiny, wounded by this contrast, seeks another dignity besides that of sorrow. The true condition of man is the reparation of his misery ; and his form never appears clothed in its most beautiful terrestrial character excepting when it takes the expression of this mystery of sorrow and grace, when it receives the imprint of a divine joy, penetrating to the abyss of our sufferings.

Let no one esteem it puerile, if, when treating on the devout assemblies of the faithful, I speak of the pleasure and consolation inspired by the sight of these holy countenances ; for doubtless some assistance was rendered to virtue by the mere fact of men being generally accustomed to behold them. It was no small advantage that in the church one could always reckon upon meeting, from time to time, with persons who bore the mystic sign that Ezekiel saw upon the foreheads, living monuments of infinite almighty grace and power divine. Moreover, in these vast basilicas, thronged with innumerable people, upon a festal day, amidst the splendor of the saints, each one might avoid all notice, feel himself solitary and unobserved by any eye save that of his guardian angel who watched over him. There, before the sacramental presence, the poor stranger—forgotten and forsaken, in a foreign land, alone in the crowd—beholds his one, ancient, and only constant friend, the friend of his childhood, the friend of his youth, his friend for eternity. There too, you will sometimes remark the timid maiden, or some child that recalls the image of a divine prototype, who stealing from observation, drops a small piece of money upon the plate after kissing the cross of Christ : for in the churches, even children enjoy the privilege of free and voluntary

\* *Id.* XXXII.



sacrifice. O how mysterious and solemn a thing is it thus to be alone in the saintly crowd! to pass as it were a disembodied spirit through such a host of ghostly combatants, thirsting after justice and the streams of a happier world! The land of malediction ends here. No more of its restrictions, of its conventional barriers, of its misnamed social forms. The ceremonies of the secular courts would be profanation in the church. No one marshals you; no one heeds you. There are pillars, behind which you may kneel and weep in secret; there are retired chapels, in which you may lie prostrate before the blessed sacrament. The poor walk here free and favored, as in presence of nature: they can approach to the altars as near as kings, and can enjoy, equally with the pomp and glory of nobility, the splendor and loveliness of the house of God: for the Church, as St. Chrysostom saith, is the common house of all men, in which the priest offers peace in common to all immediately on their entering it; and if concord were perfectly preserved, he adds, we should have no other house but this. Being however, far removed from the virtue of those who had but one heart and one soul, and being separated from each other by houses at least, when we meet here, it is requisite to have this intention; for, although, in other things we may be poor and rich, yet at least when here assembled, it is necessary that all in common should receive the priests of God with charity, and not with the lips alone, but with the mind also, should answer when they give us the salutation of peace.\*

Wherever the dignity or order of the sacred assembly required separation, it was not even kings who enjoyed the privilege. Since the first overthrow of order in the Gallic land, the mayor of every little town desires to have his seat apart within the sanctuary, which like the sacred ark, still from unbidden office awes mankind; but until that epoch, the discipline of the first ages prevailed as established by many councils;† and however displeased Milton may have been, we know that St. Ambrose would not permit even the emperor to remain in the choir after making his offering. In the morning, how bright and splendid is this beauteous temple! Every altar beholds the ineffable mystery accomplished. At night-fall, how solemn is the voice of the preacher, echoing along the dusky aisles, while the deep groan of the hours resounds, murmuring through the stillness of the upper vaults!—Remark too what a bright yet melancholy gleam, the last of the expiring day, plays upon the upper shafts of the lofty columns! How silent and how awful seem those distant regions above! At one time all is hushed, and you fear almost to breathe. You behold like Dante in the other world,

“A crowd of spirits, silent and devout;”

speechless, like *Œdipus* in the *Colonnæan* forest, allowing nothing to escape from their heart but the thought of prayer—

\* Hom. XXXIII. in 9 Matt.

† Concil. Laod. c. 19; Concil. Trull. c. 69.

*ἀφώνως, ἀλόγως τὸ τᾶς  
εὐφρήμου στόμα φροντῖδος  
ἰέντες——*

At another, a little way before you, there are perhaps some who sing the *Miserere* in responsive strains. Lo, how many saints stretch their closed hands in furtherance of their suit! On this side comes the bright procession of taper-bearing white-veiled penitents. Now they make their solemn halt; and now the tears steal down your cheeks, at the thrilling sweetness of that voice which joins the inexpressive song. O Christ, how impressive, how blessed a moment is this! “*Beati qui habitant in domo tua, in sæculum sæculi laudabunt te.*” “The Church,” says St. Germain, “is the house of prayer, and a terrestrial heaven in which God dwells.”

“O templum ! O templum ! O felicia limina cœli !  
Solaque digna Deo cœlicolisque domus !  
Hic dulces resonant melicis concentibus hymni,  
Hic colimus casta religione Deum.  
O vos felices, divinorumque capaces,  
Vos quibus astrorum splendida regna patent,  
Vos quibus arrisit cœlum, jussitque tueri,  
Angelicos vultus, angelicosque chorus.”

“But why,” continues Cardinal Bona, “do I propose the angels to excite reverence in those who enter the divine temples? The King of angels, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is himself corporeally present in the adorable sacrament of the altar. How terrible then is this place, and how worthy of all reverence!”

Would you hear the language of the middle ages in reference to these ineffable mysteries? Children of men, say they, you open the book of the divine Scriptures, and you read how Christ the Messiah walked in Judea—how he passed through the multitude—how they who sat by the way-side, cried out, “Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on us,”—how the people thronged round, heard, and adored—and you say, “How happy the eyes which saw him, and the ears which heard his divine words!” Deceive not yourselves; say rather, “*Beati qui non viderunt, et firmiter crediderunt.*” Approach—enter the churches, the world of spirits, and exercise that faith which has the promise of life eternal; for when the mystic train moves through the prostrate multitude of those who strike their breasts, while the hymn which rises is sweet as from blest voices uttering joy, you have more encouragement—what do we say? you have greater evidence—to force you to adore him, in sacramental presence, than those men possessed who saw the infant of Bethlehem and Jesus of Nazareth in the sorrows and humiliation and passion of his humanity. Fall down, then, and adore the Messiah, the celestial King, the King of glory; and according to your faith, he will have mercy on you. Are you tempted with unholy thoughts? you will be freed from them. Are you a child of sorrow, wounded by the stern strokes of a calamitous life? you will be comforted. Are you discouraged at the difficulties of your position—do you hun-

ger and thirst after justice ? you will be strengthened and refreshed. Mark and obey the prophetic invitation—"Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas : et qui non habetis argentum, properate, emite et comedite."\* Trust the experience of men, who long, like you, have trod the common ways of life, and who assure you that it will be so, that you will be filled with benediction, filled with joy ; that from the martyrdom of a sanguinary world, you will come to this peace. Yes, it is so ; we may well say it who have received the mercy of the Lord in the midst of his temple. "Sicut audivimus, ita et vidimus in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto ejus. Alleluja."

"Whosoever desires to come happily after death to the joys of the celestial kingdom, ought," says an ascetic writer of the middle ages, "while in health and life, frequently to visit the house of God, willingly to hear preaching, often to repair to confession, and seek to gain indulgences. Happy the people, and greatly laudable, who leaving vain exhibition, hasten to the house of prayer, and to the announcement of the divine word. Beautiful spectacle ! to behold the temple of God every where filled with the faithful, and the market places quiet, undisturbed by the business of the world."\* "No place on the earth," says Louis of Blois, "is more grateful to Christians than the house of prayer, where the sacrifice of the mass is daily celebrated in presence of assisting angels—so that from the holy temple these men can scarcely be torn away ; and if they behold them at a distance and are prevented from entering them, they at least salute them with a devout heart, and religiously adore the Lord of eternal Majesty."†

In the mere remembrance of the divine mysteries, men found an assistance in the great combat of life. "Alas ! If I could go into a church," we hear one cry, "if I could be where our Lord is lifted up, and appears to the congregation in sacramental presence—then in that blessed moment, I should die of rapture !" In this mystic Jerusalem the prophecy is already in a great measure fulfilled—God wipes away all tears from the eyes of men, and there is no more death, nor any more grief, nor lamentation, nor sorrow, for the former things have passed away ; and he who sitteth upon the throne has accomplished his word, and hath made all things new. The heart-rending regrets of humanity in its humblest state, and the mighty woes of genius, which the vulgar cannot conceive, are alike here forgotten. "Felix hora, quando Jesus vocat de lacrymis ad gaudium spiritus !" Can any thing be more affecting than this language of the middle ages in expressing the abundance of their joy ? Hugo de St. Victor speaks of the mystic sweetness of the ecclesiastical mysteries.‡ "O what grace hath our Lord granted to me !" cries a poor recluse, to one who was compassionating her condition : "I might be sick, and I am well ; I might be living far away in Pagan lands, and I am born here a Christian, in the neighborhood of beautiful churches and of holy priests ; I

\* Isa. lv. 1.

† Enchirid Paul Lib. I. in fin.

‡ Tom. à Kempis Sermonum III. Pars. 9.

§ Speculum de Myst. Ecclesiæ, Prolog.



might be blind and deaf, but I hear the toll of bells, hear the chants of the choir, and every morning the image of my Saviour on the cross seems to speak to my heart in words of love. I am dead, and I live only for grace, for the chants of the church, and for the holy mass. Ah, my dear friend! when I enter the house of the Lord, and the cathedral high and majestic encompasses me with so much grace and magnificence, every doubt, every earthly disquietude vanishes immediately. The smoke of the incense, the voice of the priest, which rises from the altar when I prostrate myself, awakens in my heart an impassioned fervor. The burning tapers remind me, by their secret flame, of the secret of the world and of creation, and a thrilling emotion spreads over my whole body when I think of the mysteries of which these are the signs. I meditate and I pray. The Creator and Saviour move me with interior and ineffable words, which are heard at the bottom of my soul. I feel within me a love above all—a beatitude—a felicity—a celestial breath—and then the bell tolls, and the mystery is accomplished: then a shuddering runs through my veins and through the marrow of my bones, and I feel that I am a Christian: that the incarnate Saviour is near me, and that he looks upon me with love.”

Some will recognize here the master's hand, which is employed in moulding an ideal world: but there is nothing in this of fiction. Of the intensity of these feelings we have monuments still existing in the stupendous cathedrals of the middle ages. In the year 1276, on the festival of the Purification, when Bishop Conrad, after celebrating mass, had marked the spot on which the first stone was to be placed of the cathedral tower of Strasbourg, such was the earnestness of two of the laborers, contending who should be the first to put his hand to the holy work, that one of them in the struggle received a mortal wound from a shovel; and in consequence of this accident, it was not until nine days had elapsed, and the place had been again blessed, that the bishop would permit them to resume the work of laying the foundation.—When Desiderius, the abbot of Monte Casino, was about to rebuild the church of that monastery, having conveyed marbles thither from Rome, so great was the fervor of the faithful that the first column was borne from the base of the mountain to the summit upon the shoulders of the multitude.\* In the eleventh century, Bartha, the mother of St. Eberhard, Archbishop of Salzburg, carried stones on her shoulders walking barefoot for the space of half a league, to serve in the construction of the church of St. Mary, which was then being built in her own village of Allerstorf.† We read of churches, as that of Burgo St. Sepulchro, being built by men who, like the two noble pilgrims, Ascanus and Ægidius, returning from the holy sepulchre, had been visited with heavenly dreams, as they slept on the margin of limpid fountains:‡ we read of saints; like Maur. who succeeded Zeno in Verona's chair, retiring to mountains and building

\* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, Lib. III. c. 28.

† Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 245.

‡ Italia Sacra, III. 195

churches at a fountain :\* and well might the presence of such sweet refreshment awaken the remembrance of those never failing waters which spring up unto eternal life. The churches of the middle ages are all standing memorials of the fervor with which men thirsted after justice, worshipping God day and night with sacred mysteries and holy song.

"Devout persons," says St. Bonaventura, "experience sometimes such a charm of sensible pleasures in the assemblies of the faithful, that they seem as if embalmed in the agreeable perfume which surrounds them, and dissolved in the sweetness of celestial harmony. Perchance this is the grace of God to encourage the imperfect in their commencement of a holy life, or it is the fulness of spiritual perfection, which by reason of the union of the soul with the body, is communicated to the senses ; or perhaps even it is a favor bestowed upon the body, that as it has been partaker of sorrow, and mortification with the soul, it may now also participate in its joy, for as the body labors with the soul, and both have their sufferings, there may be justice in imparting even to the body some consolation in the present as well as in the future life."† The Catholic discipline rested upon this conviction, expressed by Lombes, that "man must have pleasure. That if he find it not in the service of God, he will look for it in the false joys of the world ; for he feels that he is made to possess happiness, and he endeavors to attain his destiny." If he had found barred against him the portals of the house of God, he would have sought admittance to the assemblies of vain pleasure, though shame and ruin were sure to be his end. Showing the benefit derived from frequenting the assemblies of the faithful, the seraphic doctor observes that Saul on joining a company of prophets became himself a prophet, and being separated from them, fell into reprobation. St. Thomas being absent from the assembly of the apostles was deprived of the sight of our Saviour lately risen, and on his return to them he received this honor ; and it was when all the disciples were assembled together that they all received the Holy Ghost.‡ In fact, it was in the churches that the most signal conversions in the middle ages were known to have been made. Many who entered like that old man seen by Abbot Paul, black and cloudy, drawn contrarywise by demons, while their good angel followed at a distance, returned from it like him, shining with a sudden whiteness, having their good angel close at their side, while the demons followed afar off.§

"St. Mary of Egypt," say the old writers, "may proceed with the devout multitude of pilgrims to the holy city, to celebrate the festival of the exaltation of the cross, less to adore him who died on it, than to render it the witness of her disorders, and yet then perhaps will be the moment when the designs of the mercy of God may call her to rise from the dead. The Church prays that our vices may be cured by the sacred mysteries, and that we may receive everlasting remedies ;"||

\* Id. V. 692. † De Reformat. Hominis Exter. cap. 80. ‡ Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 28.

§ Ivoius Carnot. Decret. Pars XVII. 58.

|| Post Com. Exub. Sab.

that her solemnities "may both confer upon us the remedies of the present life, and grant us the rewards of eternity."\* History is not without mention of memorable examples to exhibit the fulfilment of such prayers. Will you hear the great poet who sung the recovery of Jerusalem, recount to you his own experience? "A time there was," says Tasso, "when I, with clouds of sensuality darkening my mind, could only recognize thee, O Lord, as a certain reason of the universe; for I doubted whether thou hadst created the world, or endowed man with an immortal soul, and I doubted of many things which flowed from that source: for how could I firmly believe in the sacraments, or in the authority of the pontiff, or in hell, or purgatory, or in the Incarnation of thy Son, if I doubted of the immortality of the soul? Willingly I would have kept down my understanding, of itself curious and wandering, and believed whatever the holy Catholic Roman Church believes and teaches; but this I desired, O Lord, not so much through love of thy infinite goodness, as through a certain servile fear which I had of the pains of hell; for often there used to sound horribly to my imagination the angelic trumpet of the great day of rewards and punishments; and I saw thee sitting upon the clouds, and I heard thee utter words full of terror, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. And this thought was so strong in me, that sometimes I used to be obliged to impart it to some friend or acquaintance, and in consequence of this fear I used to go to confession and to communion in the times and manner prescribed by thy Roman Church; and if at any time I thought I had omitted mention of any sin through negligence or shame, though it was ever so little and vile, I repeated my confession, and often made a general confession of all my errors. Yet thou knowest that always I desired the exaltation of thy faith with an incredible affection and that I always wished, though perhaps with a fervor more mundane than spiritual, that the seat of thy faith and pontificate in Rome might be preserved for ever. And thou knowest that the name of Lutheran or heretic, was abhorred and abominated by me as a pestiferous thing, and that my doubts were merely an interior affliction, until thou didst begin to warm and rejoice my heart with the flames of thy love: and then by degrees, by means of frequenting oftener the sacred offices and praying every day, my faith grew stronger from day to day, and I became sensible from experience that it is thy gift, and I learned to see my past folly in having presumed to imagine that I could discover by my intelligence the secret things of thy essence, and estimate by the measure of human reason, thy goodness, thy justice, thy omnipotence."†

This affecting passage only verifies what the writers of the middle ages affirm with regard to the effect of assisting and communicating at the sacred mysteries. "Effectus Eucharistiæ," say they, "sunt, præservare à peccatis, augere gratiam, terrenorum odium infundere, ad æternorum amorem mentem elevare, illuminare

\* Id.

† Torquato Tasso, Discorso sopra vari accidenti della sua vita scrittoa Scipion Gonzaga.



intellectum, succendere affectum, conferre animæ et corpori puritatem, conscientiæ pacem et lætitiâ, atque inseparabilem cum Deo unionem." To these adorable mysteries of the altar the faithful came, pressed by various wants. "Some," as St. Bonaventura says, "hastened thither, moved by the force of calamity to lay their sorrows at the feet of Jesus. Others came to desire some grace and especial mercy, knowing that the heavenly Father can refuse nothing to his Son. Others were constrained to fly thither to proclaim their gratitude, and to pour forth the love of a thankful heart, knowing that there is nothing so worthy of being presented to God as the sacred body and blood of the eternal victim. Others pressed forward to give glory to God and to honor his saints, for it is in the celebration of these mysteries of love that we can pay worthy homage to his adorable majesty, and testify reverence for those who served him. Lastly, others hastened on the wings of charity and compassion, for it was there that they could hope to obtain salvation for the living and rest for the dead."\* Thus to the thirsty pilgrims through the rocks of the desert did the fountains of water appear. Thus did the generation of those who sought justice receive benediction from the Lord, and mercy from God their Saviour.

---

## CHAPTER VI.



THE monuments as well as the history of the middle ages in almost every page furnish some proof or indication of the love which men of all classes entertained for the sacred offices of the Catholic Church. Although high mass used to be celebrated every day in many monasteries,† and the canonical office regularly sung in every cathedral and even parish church, still the affection of the laity prompted them to make many foundations for the multiplication of offices which are monuments not a little curious of the spirit which then animated society. The seventy-one parish churches in Venice, were equal to cathedrals in structure, and in respect to the riches of the sacred vestments, and other ecclesiastical ornaments not inferior.‡ With such fervor did the inhabitants of that city attend to the celebration of the Catholic ceremonies, that more than 200,000 pieces of gold were annually given for pious works, both men and women contributing. It was a custom for pious laymen to agree together to found prebends in different churches, as in those at Paris men-

\* De Reformat. Hominis Exter cap. 82.

† Bibliothec. Cluniac. in 1707.

‡ Italia Sacra, Tom. V. 1176.

tioned by Lebeuf, of St. Thomas du Louvre, and of St. Honoré. In the church of the Magdalen, the canonical hours with high mass were celebrated every day according to the foundation made by the will of Stephen Nyvert, a merchant of the street of St. Denis;\* and Nicolas Fillon, a citizen of Paris, founded a chapel in the church of Auteuil, on condition that the chaplain priest should keep a school for the boys of that place and of Pacy, and should conduct them every evening to the church for the benediction; and he founded also a school for girls, whom the mistress was to conduct in the same manner.† In the seigneurial chapel of the church of Mery-sur-Oise there was a foundation made by Anthony de Saint Chamand, Seigneur de Mery, for a priest to say four masses each week, and to instruct the children, who were to be conducted every evening to the church to sing there the anthems in honor of the blessed Virgin and of St. Anthony, and to pray for the king and the Archbishop of Paris.‡

In the church of Essone, in the same diocese, there is an inscription in Gothic characters to record the foundation of a benediction to be given between six and seven in the evening of Easter day: the founders are Nicole Bossart, Avocat in Parliament, Seigneur of Champeueil, and Jane Ferron, his wife. Another inscription records that their daughter, widow of Guibert, Avocat, has founded in 1601, "An O filii et filliæ."§ Claude le Pelletier, Controller General and Minister of State, after quitting the court and retiring to reside in his Castle of Villeneuve-le-Roy, founded a benediction and complin every evening in the parish church, at which he used himself constantly to assist.|| There was a foundation also in the church of Neufmoutier, of a sermon on All-Saints' day, after the vespers of all saints, to be a commemoration of All Souls, to prepare the people for the devotion of the following day.¶ Guillaume Foucault, founded in the Cathedral of Evreux, the solemn office of St. Agatha, with a general procession every year to commemorate the deliverance of that city from the army of the Huguenots, which took place on that day.\*\* In the ancient monastic charters also we find many foundations by pious nobles, who desired that certain psalms should be recited publicly at particular hours, as in that which was at the Monastery of St. Martin, at Tours, which prescribes that after prime should be sung the psalm, "Ad te levavi oculos meos."†† But without multiplying these instances unnecessarily, let us now take a few particular examples from the history of the ages of faith of the love which the laity evinced for the divine offices; and who will not be struck with admiration at the majestic portraits which they furnish of the great and good men of Catholic times. Truly in their love for the sacred offices we behold the power of that religion, which in days of early persecution could constrain the wife of a Roman Emperor secretly to quit the imperial bed like an adulterous woman, in order to hasten to the assembly of the poor, to seek Jesus Christ at the altar of an obscure martyr,

\* Hist. du Diocese de Paris, I. 11.

† Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom. III. 10.

‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom. IV. 197.

§ d. Tom. XI. 148. || Id. XII. 138.

¶ Id. XIV. 238.

\*\* Hist. d'Evreux, p. 324.

†† Bernier Hist. de Blois, Preuves II.

among the tombs, and among men who were proscribed and despised ; for so we read of the Empress Prisca and her daughter Valeria, who used to repair secretly by night to pray in the catacombs, not daring to incur the fury of Galerius.

It was a maxim of the Pythagoreans never to turn from the road in order to visit a temple, because the worship of God should not be conducted by the way as a matter of secondary importance ;\* and this dictate of natural reason was obeyed in the middle ages with a consistency that admitted of no obstacle from the conventional forms of civil life, and with a fervor that indicated the presence of those rites which according to the voice of ancient prophecy were to afford delight to kings. Alfred, that model of heroes and of wise kings, used to observe hours of devotion both night and day, like a monk, reciting prayers and psalms. He never let a day pass without assisting at the divine offices. He used to visit churches at the first crowing of the cock, and to prostrate himself at the foot of the altar, beseeching God to grant him purity, and deliverance from temptation. It is recorded of Clodoald, son of King Clodomir, that he "preferred being present in the choir singing the divine praise to hearing the vain words of men."† King Robert of France, besieging Melun, on the festival of St. Hippolytus, contrived to enter the town in disguise to assist at the office. This is the king who is said to have composed a prose and some responses which were adopted by the Church.‡ The high tower of the Castle of Amboise was built by the governor, in order that he might see from the top of it the tower of St. Martin, of Tours, for whom he had singular devotion.§

The love for the divine offices induced many kings and nobles to convert their palaces and castles into churches. Thus Pepin changed his palace at Angely into a church and abbey under the invocation of St. John, which gave rise to the town of St. Jean d'Angely. Clovis, in like manner, gave up his palace to form the church of St. Geneviève, and Hughes Capet converted his house into the church of St. Bartholomew ; Robert gave up his to form the church of St. Nicholas, and Henry I. abandoned his to erect the priory of St. Martin des Champs.|| King St. Louis assisted every night at the nocturns in the holy chapel. The bells used to toll every where to summon all the faithful to church at that hour, which custom prevailed till the time of King Charles V. Philippe-de-Long made an ordinance concerning the discipline of his palace, in which he declares that he will attend to no business until he has assisted every day at the holy sacrifice of the mass. This was the custom in England in the time of Lydgate, as we learn from his advice. "And than every daye whan ye shall go to do ony thyng aske this question of yourself, wheder art thou goyne, whyder ye be in the way of virtue or wyckedness, folowyng Cryst or the

\* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 18.

† Mabillon, I. 1. Act. O. S. Bened. 136.

‡ Chronic. S. Bertini, c. 33 apud Martini Thesaur. Anecd. Tom. III.

§ Duchesne, Antiquitez des Villes de France, I. 499.

|| Lydgate, the dyctacy of goostly helthe.



Devyll, in the way to heaven or to hell. If it may be, here masse every day, for by that ye be made the more able to do al good workes in the day folowyng, and prosper the better in every thing.\* Charlemagne, unless prevented by indisposition, used to rise regularly in the night for matins,† and assisted at the office, wearing a long pallium.‡ His chapel, with its relics, ornaments, and numerous clergy, served with as much splendor as any cathedral, followed him on all his journeys, an example which was imitated by his successors and even by petty seigneurs. By means of a diptyche which contained paintings or carved imagery in a folding tablet, every one could arrange his little oratory on a journey, and have it always with him; for the number was comparatively small of those barons, who as was said, “were more delighted with the barking of hounds than with the melody of celestial hymns.” § King Louis VII. on the coast of Asia Minor, every day fighting against the Turks in person, used on his return each evening to desire that vespers and complin should be sung before him. The kings of France used solemnly to preserve in their oratory, and even to bear with them to war the cap of St. Martin, thinking that it would be a protection to show honor to the relic of such a friend of God; from which cap Ducange, following the monk of St. Gall, derives the word “capella.” That no class of men might be exempt from the consolation of the divine mysteries, mass used always to be said in prisons on Sundays and festivals, and generally by monks of an adjacent monastery. In our age, indeed, Silvio Pellico mentions that it was not till after a long time had elapsed, that by the remonstrance of Father Stephen Paulowich, the unhappy prisoners in the Spillberg had permission to hear mass. “We used,” says he, “to be conducted strongly guarded, and placed so that we should not draw the attention. A Capuchin friar used to say mass. This good man used always to finish with an oremus, and to implore our deliverance from bonds. When he came to the altar he used to cast a piteous look on each of the three groups, and then remain a long time with his head stooped in prayer. Most sweet and pleasant it was to us to hear the chant and the organ which accompanied it.”|| Cardinal Pacca, however, says, that while he was confined in the fortress of Fenestrelle, there used to be more masses said in its chapel than in any cathedral of Italy, in consequence of the number of captive priests. But to return to the churches. Time would fail me were I to tell of all the emperors, kings, high nobles, and magistrates of free cities, who used to place their chief delight in hearing the sacred office. Maximilian I., Charles V., Ferdinand III., Philip IV., Louis XIII., and many illustrious counts of the empire, are remarkable examples. From reading the diplomas and observing the deeds of the Norman princes in Sicily, it would appear that their chief joy on having expelled the Saracens was derived from being

\* Id II. 182.

† Eginhard. in Kar M. c. 26.

‡ Mon. Sangall. I. 33.

§ Ionæ Episcop. de Institut. Laicali, Liv. II. c. 23. apud Dacher Spicileg. Tom. I.

‡ Le mie Prigioni, cap. 80.

able to restore and perpetuate the solemn celebration of the sacred mysteries. Roger, duke of Calabria, in his grants to the church of Agrigentum, appeals to his having ordained episcopal churches throughout Sicily.\* This illustrious prince built and endowed innumerable churches. Gaufridus relates that to that of Troinensis he gave vessels of the altar, and more vestments than sufficed to the clergy, besides candelabras, crosses, texts, and bells of melodious sound. "To whom," cries he, "unless to this great prince, are we indebted for the sweet melody of chants, for the words of the sacred law, and for the celebration of divine worship?"

In general, the ancient diplomas to churches are all characterized by the spirit expressed in that granted to the church of Palermo, in the eleventh century, which begins by observing that all men whom God hath made partakers of earthly government should attend to the ecclesiastical and divine mysteries much more than to the pleasures of the world.† In fact, the celebration of the divine worship seems to have been ever uppermost in the mind of these Norman deliverers of Sicily. Count Roger, in the first year of his kingdom, having sailed from Naples with three ships for Sicily, was assailed by a furious tempest off Salerno, which during two days exposed him to the most imminent danger of perishing. In this situation he made a vow to God, that on the first shore at which he should arrive safely, he would erect a church in honor of the Saviour, where the divine mysteries might be offered up for ever. Shortly after, on the feast of the transfiguration, the wind becoming favorable, he reached in safety the port of Cefalu, which was then an obscure town, the name having been derived from its former position on the summit of a steep rock which projected into the sea. At the foot of this rock, which is washed with the sea waves, he built a church to St. George, and at the corner of the rock he erected the votive temple to the holy Saviour; adorned it with antique columns, and curious mosaics, and conferred upon it the dignity of an episcopal see.‡

The admiration of king Conrad, on arriving at Salzbouurg, when returning from the Holy Land, was elicited by the extraordinary splendor of the sacred vestments, and the venerable aspect of the devout wearers in that cathedral: and on his departure, wishing to testify the satisfaction which he had derived from his visit, he esteemed it the most honorable testimony to declare that he had never seen a city in which the worship of God, day and night, was celebrated with such solemnity and magnificence.§

Henry the Liberal, count of Troyes, who was born in 1127, had been called so on account of his munificence to the churches. In 1157 he founded and built the canonical church of St. Stephen at Troyes, adjoining his castle, for seventy-two canons, who were to perform the divine offices in plain chant and good music to glorify God forever. Besides this he founded and built the canonical churches

\* Sicilia Sacra, 1. 695. † Scila Sacra, I. 74. ‡ Ibid. II. 798. § Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 252.

of Sezane and of St. Quiriace at Provins, and also ten other churches of canons, besides a number of hospitals. He so loved the clergy, that he used to call the canons, *filios meos, capellanos meos, prebendas meos*. This magnificent church of St. Stephen served as the chapel of the counts of Troyes. Count Henry loved it as much as he did his own flesh. There was a tribune which looked upon the high altar, to which there was an ascent by steps from the interior of his palace, and he used to come there sometimes, with his family to hear the divine office, but generally he used to descend and sit below with the canons, chanting with them, and wearing his habit of red velvet, and a collegiate cap of the same material, covered with precious stones, which was preserved in the treasury of that church till the revolution.\* So, also, adjoining the church of the abbey of St. Martin, at Séz, there was a building in which the dukes of Alençon used to be lodged when they came to seek edification with the monks. Beneath this building there was a particular chapel into which these lords used to descend in order to assist at the office of the night. There was to be seen the tomb of Duke John I., slain in the battle of Agincourt. These dukes had given the monks a house at Alençon.†

In the chapel of the Duke of Burgundy there used to be high mass sung every day and also vespers. Within the castle of Blois the divine offices used to be celebrated in two chapels of ancient foundation. Even within the walls of castles, which were rather places of defence than of courtly life, the divine offices used to be daily celebrated. Thus within Dover Castle, the ruins of a very ancient church are still seen, in which it was expressly ordained, that a long peal was to announce the singing of matins, and that three masses should be said daily, for the governor, the marshalsmen, and the soldiers; and the presence of the three chaplains was required at the celebration of high mass, before which no priest was permitted to leave the castle.

Falco II. count of Anjou, under Louis IV. used to sing in St. Martin's church with the clergy, sitting in the choir as honorary canon. The same is related of Richard II. of England, and of Ferdinand of Spain. St. Helwige, duchess of Poland, and St. Elizabeth, daughter of the king of Hungary, are also recorded at having taken delight in hearing the divine offices solemnly sung. Witichend relates of Mathilda, the mother of Otho the Great, that "every night she filled her chamber with melody and with all kinds of divine song, for she had a cell next to the church in which she used to repose a little, and from which, rising up every night, she used to enter the church, although she had singers and chanters within her cell and before the door, who praised the divine clemency. King Dagobert's fondness for assisting at vespers is learned from the romantic circumstance connected with the sweet voice of Nantilda; and the general disposition of the laity in this respect may be learned from a reference to their liberality to the choirs of

\* Desguerres Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 293.

† Recherches Historiques sur la Ville et le Diocèse de Séz, par D'Orville, 52.



churches, as the instance recorded of Ulric Engelbrecht, to whom the cathedra. of Strasbourg was indebted for the first organ placed in it, in the year 1260.

Nor are later ages without examples of the same disposition. Louis XIII. composed motets which were performed in his chapel. During the siege of La Rochelle, in the absence of chanters and musicians, he worked night and day to note the first and second vespers of Pentecost, that all might be ready for the festival; and in his last illness, he composed a *De Profundis* which was sung in his chamber at the moment of his death.\*

Christine de Pisan, whose language is always so picturesque, speaks at great length on the love which the French princes of her time evinced for the sacred offices. Of Louis, duke of Orleans, son of Charles V., she says, “Il a très bien continué en dévotions, oraisons, à l’esglise estre longuement, et à oyr et dire grant service; bonnes gens et dévotz aime et volentiers ot leur enseignemens, comme il appert par la fréquentacion qu’il fait chascun jour par long espace en l’église des Célestins, où a couvent de sains preudeshomes servant Dieu, et là ot le service; de laquelle fréquentacion est impossible que son ame et ses meurs n’en vaillent mieulx, et que Dieu en ses fais ne lui soit plus propice.” Every day, with his own hand, he gave large alms, especially during the time of the passion of our Lord, when he used to visit the Hostel Dieu and the poor sick people.† Of the emperor Henry also she relates an anecdote that shows what attention he paid to having the office celebrated with all possible grandeur. “The emperor,” she says, “who greatly loved the offices of the church, and had pleasure in hearing them celebrated with solemnity, desired on one occasion, that a certain deacon who had a remarkably melodious voice, should sing the gospel. The deacon excused himself from complying, and when the emperor then commanded him to obey, he refused point blanc. The emperor to whom it was intimated that the deacon had possibly rendered himself unworthy, by some secret act, desiring to try his constancy, ordered him to be threatened with imprisonment unless he complied, but in vain. It was then announced to him that he should be sent into banishment. The clerk immediately arranged his few necessary objects and departed. The emperor having sent after him, received him on his return with these words, “You who have feared more to offend God than to incur my anger, are worthy of being reputed according to your merit. I wish that you may have the first bishopric vacant, but from henceforth beware how you involve yourself in such a dilemma.”‡

The wise and heroic grand master of the Teutonic order, Luther of Brunswick, in the fourteenth century, had such a love and regard for church music that he used to be often found singing in the choir in the midst of the monks; and in founding the school of Königsberg he required that on all festivals, and when it should be necessary, twenty-six of the scholars should be sent to the church of the old city

\* Castil-Blaze, *Chapelle-Musiques des Rois de France*.

† *Livre des Fais*, &c. Liv. II. chap. 16.

‡ *Id.* Liv. I. chap. 35.

to assist at the sacred song, and at the procession,\* and a similar regulation was established in the school of Elbing under the same order.†

The minstrel of the ages of chivalry has often occasion to allude to this love of holy offices. Thus, the Lord of the Isles, even light Edward says to Bruce, that while pondering in anxious mind to find a proper messenger to bear his written mandate to Cuthbert on the Carrick shore:

"I chanced, at early dawn, to pass  
The chapel gate, to snatch a mass."

And how beautiful is that sudden memory of sacred rites which comes upon the passenger in the hasty bark:

"They paused not at Columbia's isle,  
Though peal'd the bells from the holy pile  
With long and measured toll;  
No time for matin or for mass,  
And the sounds of the holy summons pass  
Away in the billow's roll."

Whoever has lived in a Catholic country, will readily understand these feelings, and be able to supply other unnumbered instances. At Freyburg, passing at sunset by the churches when the doors were closed, I used to find several persons kneeling without in silent prayer, with their faces turned towards the sanctuary. St. Cassemir, the royal youth of Poland, used privately to lay prostrate on the earth before the doors of churches, during the most inclement nights, imploring the divine mercy. Venantius Fortunatus exhorts his reader to press with his lips the threshold of the blessed Apollinaris, alluding to the basilica of Classe:‡ and in fact, I have frequently in Italy seen persons approach softly and kiss the portal of churches—affecting act of a natural piety! Ulysses on finding himself in Ithaca, kissed the ground; and these poor thirsty exiles recognized in the gates of the sanctuary the entrance to their celestial country.

After what we have seen, one can understand how, during the middle ages, the most dreadful calamity that could befall a people was an interdict, which deprived them for a time of the consolations of public worship, and caused a cessation of all the ceremonies and pomps of devotion. It would be difficult perhaps at present to conceive adequately the grief of men on such an occasion; for in such spiritual ages, no material interests were deemed comparable to those of the intellectual nature. When an event of this occurred in France, in the reign of Philip Augustus, numbers of devout persons left their country, and passed into Normandy and Brittany, where, as fiefs of England, the ceremonies of the church were not interrupted. The most destructive visitations of Providence caused no interruption to the divine course of the ecclesiastical year. On Friday, the 9th of January, the first concussions of the dreadful earthquake of the year 1693 were felt at Ca-

\* Voigt Geschichte Preussens IV. 519.

† V. 384.      ‡ Italia Sacra, I. 327.

tana. On the 11th, the whole city was suddenly overthrown: temples, monasteries, palaces, and other edifices, buried under a mighty ruin eighteen thousand citizens. The few canons of the cathedral who survived, immediately erected a wooden church, and there recited the ecclesiastical offices; Peter Moncada, one of the senators who had escaped, having, with his new associates, spared no pains to assist them, in order that nothing might be wanting to the solemnity of the sacred functions.\* One hundred and fifty years before, when the Syracusans believed that their whole Peninsula was about to be overwhelmed, while the citizens were fled to the rocks and caverns, on the sacred night of the nativity, the bishop and the clergy celebrated mass, and discharged all the holy offices, in a ship which was stationed near the shore.†

The establishment by law of the modern heresies, operating like a perpetual interdict, caused numbers of devout persons, of every condition, to go into voluntary exile, leaving England and Germany for countries where they could enjoy the solemnities of religion, in the same manner as many of the inhabitants of the south of France, in an earlier age, had fled into Spain to avoid the Albigenses. St. Joseph and the Blessed Mary used to go every year up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and if they made this long and painful journey to obey the law of Moses, it was no marvel that devout Christians should engage in distant journeys to find a Catholic sanctuary. Those O'Neils, those Douglasses, and others, whose tombs we find in the abbeys on the continent—exiles from their country, through love of the divine temples, and for their faith—might have said with the heroic defender of the Heraclidæ, πόλις μὲν οἴχεται, ψυχὴ δ' ἐσώθη.‡ In all ages, there have been unnumbered instances of that love and constancy so beautifully described by the French poet, when he represents one whose pleasure consisted in presenting the incense or the lights at the altar, in hearing them chant the infinite grandeur of God, and in beholding the pompous order of his ceremonies; and who preferred being an exile, rather than to remove to the palace of kings, where he would behold those who followed other rites, and invoked another God. If the hill from which Boabdil took his last view of Granada be known among the Spaniards by the name of the Last Sigh of the Moor, that from which a Catholic beholds, for the last time, the land where, like the magi of the East, he is leaving Jesus and Mary, and returning to his own country, which has rejected the light of faith, may well receive a mournful appellation. No trial was greater, than when sickness prevented persons from joining the assembly of the faithful. Madame Elizabeth du Chevreul, in her last illness, being unable, through weakness, to leave her chamber on Palm Sunday, though she ardently desired to assist in the church, said with great humility, "It is true, I am not worthy to bear the palm: this honor belongs only to those who are conquerors over sin."§

\* Sicilia Sacra, I. 566.

† Id. I. 640.

‡ Eurip. Herac. 14.

§ Vie d'Elizabeth Rauquet, Dame du Chevreul d'Esturville. Paris, 1660.



It is curious to remark how some modern poets stumble with regard to the consolation which attached devout Catholics to the divine offices, as where Sir Walter Scott describes the dejected Clare on having access to the holy altars to assist at mass ; and adds, that it was nevertheless dearest to her wounded heart to spend her hours alone.\* From reading which few words we only infer with certainty, that he did not know in what manner the religion of the middle ages acted upon the heart of man.

But if even ordinary kings and warriors cherished this affection, in common with the lowest of the people, for the divine offices of religion, how do we suppose they were loved by men of the highest intellectual cultivation and of peaceful habits—by poets, philosophers, and those endowed with the noblest conceptions of art ?

Do we not remark how the bare mention of the offices of the Catholic Church instantly raises up, in every mind enriched with antique lore, the images of a Dante, a Tasso, a Thomas More, a Guercini, a Michael Angelo ? and revives the memory of the great scholars and philosophers of Italy, such as Marsilius Ficinus and Angelus Politian, whose dispositions in this respect are attested by history ; on all of whose tombs might have been inscribed, four times, the letter D, which is so placed upon the sepulchre of John Theopolas, in the basilica of St. Mark at Venice, to express the sentence ever on his tongue—"Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ."† At the time when Urbino, resorted to by such a multitude of learned and noble men, possessed such attractions that no one was considered sufficiently learned, or to have attended sufficiently to his intellectual cultivation, who had spent some time there, it was not forgotten that in that church the divine worship was celebrated with more splendor and perfection of sacred music than almost in any other.‡

Would you learn how these illustrious men lived and divided time ? Observe that admirable painter Guercini. He used to rise early, and pray and meditate for an hour. Then he would go to mass ; after which he used to work till dinner. At sun-set he went again to some church, and then returned home to sketch till supper. Such was his life.—Petrarch in reply to the Cardinal de Cabassole, says, "Your letter found me in a languishing state, so weakened by fever, that I am obliged to be carried to the church, though it joins my house."

Methinks I need not multiply these instances, to show in what light the divine offices of the Roman rite were regarded by men of every class and country, during the ages of faith. Here is abundant proof, that the common voice of mankind would have applied to the Catholic Church, the words of the prophet, "*Hæccini est urbs perfecti decoris, gaudium universæ terræ.*"

On a former occasion it was remarked, that familiarity with the sacred offices of the church, tended to diffuse a poetic influence through society ; and after

\* Marm. VI.

† Italia Sacra. V. 1342.

‡ Id. II.

what we have seen in the progress of our inquiry, methinks no one can be inclined to doubt the justice of that position. Reserving, however, further remarks on this head till we have seen the whole grandeur and beauty of the ecclesiastical course, let us pause at present to observe the many beautiful points of view—vistas as it were—through the obscure wood of antique history, which opens upon us from the spot on which we now stand. For in the first place, from the single fact of the church offices being thus loved and cultivated, remark what an important conclusion must be drawn with respect to the intellectual character of the middle ages and with what an answer it supplies us to one of the most insidious objections of the modern sophists. They tell us, that in the Catholic Churches there was too much ceremony for an intellectual people. We are now enabled to see at first sight how prodigiously and profoundly false is this famous objection. Certainly, if “Wisdom,” as the ancient text affirms, hath ever literally “built for herself a house,” here, in the Catholic temple, that mystic edifice is found. These men either understand not or care not what they say. For an intellectual people! Let them say rather for a sensual people,—

“In understanding, harden’d into stone,

And to that hardness, spotted too and stain’d.”\*

What! is it an injury to the understanding when the sight is employed as a medium of instruction? the sight, so essentially an organ of intelligence, that in every language of the world the expression for understanding is derived from the term which signifies its degrees? No, certainly; but where habits of sensuality exist, all ceremony in religion will seem not only hateful, but in a philosophic sense, ridiculous. To enjoy the ceremonies of faith, and fully to feel their tender mystery, the heart must be inflamed with desires of invisible good, the reason, for the time at least, unclouded, the imagination struggling to be free from everything that defiles and debases—the whole man thirsting after justice, either in the purity of innocent or in the sincerity of penitential sorrow. The world, therefore, rejects the symbol as it rejected Him whom it represents. It cannot receive them; for the love of the world hath not invisible eyes, by which spiritual things can be discerned. It neither sees them nor knows them. Hence the Church, feeling this necessity, constantly prays, that “what her children celebrate with a solemn office, they may attain by the intelligence of a pure mind;”† and that “ever fixing their thoughts on reasonable things, they may perform the things that are pleasing to him.”‡

Dear to all, excepting to the worshippers of matter, who must indeed esteem them frivolous and empty things, the sacred rites of the Catholic Church are, in an especial degree, calculated to charm an eminently intellectual and learned people; because, to mention only one of many reasons, “the more thoughtful and genuine-

\* Dante, *Purg.* XXXIII.

† Post Com. 1st Sund. after Epiph.

‡ Collect, 6th Sund. after Epiph.

ly poetic a mind is, so much the more formed and historical will be its religion," as Novalis, with profound justice, remarks.\* Are men historians, philosophers, musicians? What a mine of treasure do they possess in the Catholic ritual? In relation to the former, how many curious things are observable in the liturgy, which recall interesting circumstances and events of ancient times? Why are the titles and names of the authors omitted in the lessons read by the church on holy Saturday? An historian will tell you that it was so ordered lest the catechumens, coming from among the Gentiles, might scorn when they heard the names of Hebrew authors, such enmity existed between the Gentiles and Jews.†

Thus to the learned, not only was there an original sanctity and grandeur, and an inherent charm in the liturgy, but many things that were at first only common and accidental, were hallowed by time, and rendered doubly attractive by the power of historical and philosophic associations. Besides, did not the smallest thing acquire a dignity from the mere fact of its catholicity and universal usage by the church? These vestments are not only holy from religious motives; assuredly they are majestic and venerable from the historical and poetic idea connected with them: but when Lord Chatham called upon certain members entitled spiritual of the House of Lords, to interpose "the unsullied sanctity of their lawn," the allusion might assuredly have been heard either with a stare or a smile. Nor let any one imagine that the learned would regard these things with different eyes when they found themselves in places of rustic simplicity, as if there were a possibility of their finding the Catholic Church disarmed, and disglorified under any circumstances of humiliation. Not to speak of the divinity which ever guards it, the majesty with which it is surrounded at all times—even that majesty, in respect to the present world, which it has acquired by the tribute of so many sublime and kingly minds, so many saintly and heroic defenders—serves it instead of the tongue of an Augustin or the sceptre of a Charlemagne. The spirits of Austin, Ambrose, Gregory Bede, and Fenelon, are within these humble walls.

If you enter them, you will imagine that you behold there an Ignatius or an Alfred, the psalms of martyrs, and the offering of kings. Fear not the contagion of vulgar minds from being associated with the vulgar in these Catholic rites. Although the vulgar, as Silvio Pellico remarks, can and ought to love them, it is not true, that in consequence they become a vulgarity.‡ The immense benefits of the Divine goodness, have, in fact, to use the words of St. Thomas, conferred upon the Christian people an inestimable dignity. Think not that the person of that rude illiterate priest can in any manner diminish the force of such impressions. Not to observe how false may be your estimate in supposing him such, observe that the Catholic ritual is not depending for its effects upon men. It is not at the mercy of any person, or capable of being counteracted by the folly or demerit

\* *Schriften*. II. 305.

† Hugo de St. Victor, *de Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, Lib. III. c. 42.

‡ *Dei Doveri degli Uomini*.



of its ministers. In all essential parts, the qualities of the priest as an individual passed for nothing. The chasuble literally, like the charity of which it is the symbol, covers all. Persons of highly cultivated minds, and interiorly philosophic, were not in the position in which Apollodorus stood, who besides one man (Socrates), considered all teachers as wretched and despicable persons, against whom he felt inclined to rail as often as he heard them.\* They never felt as if they suffered indignity by repairing to the Catholic Church on the wildest and farthest shore of Christendom; for they knew that in the meanest chapel in the most desolate region of the earth, they would meet with the same mystery as if they were to enter the basilica of the Vatican. Before the altar and the vested priest, they recognize not the man, but the prophet; while in regard to things subordinate, the wisdom and the exquisite fitness of the divine offices were every where the same. To obviate, however, the possibility of error, the ecclesiastical canons required that "scholastics should be carefully admonished, as Christians clothed with humility, not to despise those who they know avoid vice of manners rather than of words; that they should not presume to compare an exercised tongue with a chaste heart, or to laugh at any priest or minister of the Church who should be guilty of a solecism or barbarism in offering up prayer to God."† Here then one may remark what an unfounded assertion is that of the moderns who suppose that in the Catholic Church men of learning and genius constituted a small initiated class like the philosophers of heathen times, who in secret nourished a profound contempt for the public discipline, and that the clergy did not permit all men to be instructed in the same mysteries, but followed the example of Pythagoras, who suited his lessons to his hearers, calling some Pythagoreans and other Pythagorists, in the same manner as men used to say attics and atticists, to express the genuine disciples and those less perfect who should imitate them.‡ Whether or not they conceived this idea from feeling conscious of what takes place in their own communities, in which rationalism from the very first really constituted a similar class, is a question that may be left to their own consideration; but to suppose that a learned Catholic is in relation to the crowd of the faithful what the philosopher was to the heathen multitude, is an error that nothing can excuse. A mere knowledge of history is sufficient to convince any one accessible to conviction, that the Catholic religion was not a sect of philosophy. The sages of the middle age inverted the definition of the Stagyrte, believing with the multitude, while in point of grace and eloquence of development they spoke as the few. A Roger Bacon, an Anselm, a Richard of St. Victor, a Thomas Aquinas, saw in the sacred rites precisely the same thing as was seen in them by any simple peasant or page of a baronial castle, who recited his chaplet, without being able to follow the prayers of the priest. But more than this is true; for sages and men of deep philosophic minds, there is a peculiar want unknown to the common race

\* Plato, *Conviv.* 1.† *Ironis Carnot. Decret. Pars VI.* 383.‡ *Jamblich. cap.* 18.

of men, which the ritual of the Church was eminently calculated to supply. The human soul, in proportion as it attaches itself to God, and acquires a thirst for justice, becomes more averse to every thing like change or uncertainty. If not supported by its immortal hopes, intolerable would be its anguish on account of the alterations which are continually taking place in visible objects and in every thing with which it is in immediate contact. The Catholic religion in an admirable manner administered consolation to it in this state, through the medium of material and in themselves mutable things; for it taught the curious and inestimable art of symbolizing nature, and it furnished it with an altar, which was one spot in the visible world, exempted like the faith of which it was the emblem, from this necessity of change. View these old hermits in their caves, having nothing but an image of our Lady and an altar with a book. What a peaceful symbol is here of an immutable and supremely blissful state?

Well not only would many a king, like Richard, have given their gorgeous palace for such a hermitage, their figured goblets for this dish of wood, their subjects for this pair of carved saints, and their large kingdom for this little grave; but in imagination all the master minds of the middle ages, all the great intellectual guides, within the domain of art, aspired to this condition attained to it internally even amidst the vicissitudes and disorders of a troubled life. They gave this direction to their intelligence, not through a reckless disdain of the Creator's bounty, or an unworthy softness of soul, but from a reasonable and just conviction, that by so doing they confined, concentrated their desires for the present within the sphere of symbols, and so escaped the shocks and fluctuations of the world's destiny. With eyes fixed upon the cross their view seemed to open into eternity. Possessing this one point of rest they no longer sought to look abroad over the wide and universal theatre; for they would have only felt oppressed by the spectacle of that immense nature: but viewed as symbols of the immutable and invisible good, neither upon the beautiful prospects of an extended horizon, nor upon any flower which embalmed their path, did they fear to indulge too fixed a gaze. Art, literature, science, dismissed them to traverse, not to rest in the material world. But to renew these blossoms which decked the altar,—to see revived these symbolic lights which sparkle over it,—to perfume it with the odor of incense—to behold it gilded with the gladsome beams of morning, or shaded with the sombre livery of the departing day,—these were the things which kept their souls as it were in presence of the ineffable and immutable felicity of the Eternal Existence. It is true the revolving seasons caused even here a show of change; for the hue of holy vestments varied with the object of each day's commemoration; but these were only tones which belonged to one universal harmony, and varied symbols of a constant joy.

Against the terrors of death too, that greatest of changes to which our flesh is heir, this love for the ceremonies of faith provided men; for though all the pomp of worldly magnificence must fail, the affections associated with the holy solemn-

ties of the militant Church, with her processions, her stoles, and palms, would endure for ever in the heavenly Jerusalem. Let no one imagine that I am explaining the history of the middle ages by referring to principles which were not in reality then received and understood. Subtle and abstract as they may appear, they are nevertheless professed in those very documents of ancient times which one might have supposed would have been exclusively occupied with considerations of a practical nature. Witness the words of the diploma granted to the church of St. Saviour, at Messina, by Count Roger, the pious and brave king, the protector of Christians, as he is styled in the title. "Because," saith he, "the things of the present life are corruptible and mortal, and like titles are changed from one to another, the lovers of religion meditated a certain wondrous mutation of these things by the right hand of the Most High according to the psalm; and employing all their study in order that they might remain firm and eternal, they found no other method excepting by erecting divine temples, and by dedicating to them and so returning to God their possessions. For thus it comes to pass that by the unceasing hymns and lauds which are offered up in them, God is worshipped and glorified without intermission, and they gain for themselves a memory of eternal beatitude and constant prayer. Therefore, our tranquillity, following this example as a certain primitive rule, hath made this divine and sacred foundation, and hath built this temple on the promontory of the port of Messina to the glory and praise of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."\* We find the same sentiments expressed along with the donations to the church of Anglona, in the year 1231. "Although things of men prove frail and decay with length of years, there are nevertheless some things to which men can impart a perpetual stability, namely, those which are dedicated to the divine worship, and attached to the heritage of God with men."†

The love for the sacred offices not only indicated a thoughtful and an intellectual people, but also men of pure and virtuous or penitential lives. Thus the historian says of Otilo, Duke of Bavaria, in the eighth century, "that being moved to compunction by divine love, he began to build and enlarge churches, and to love the servants of God who served them."‡ It may be observed, that it was the general character of all the chants and anthems of the Church to be a repetition of those high lessons and awful menaces which we read on the very stones, and marble, and windows of her temples, which reminded the unjust in language still more awful than that of Æschylus, that there was a spirit which followed him to whatever land he journeyed,—that even by dying he could not be liberal, that he would not be too free in death.

———θανὼν δ'  
οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος,§

\* Sicilia Sacra, II. 972.  
§ Æschyl. Eumenid.

† Italia Sacra, Tom. VII. 81.

‡ Germania Sacra, Tom. II.



and which in every form of majestic symbol seemed to proclaim that great truth, “*venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos.*” Truly I can see great advantage resulting to the citizens from those terrible sounds of the choir as well as from the majestic countenances of angels and prophets, and even from the horribly gay demoniacal imagery which surrounded it; for the solemn exclamation,

“*Quem patronum rogaturus,  
Cum vix justus sit securus,*”

is not less impressive than that perilous passage represented on the tomb of Dagobert in the Abbey of St. Denis, where the poor king, naked amidst an infernal crew, stands with supplicating arms raised, while a demon seems alternately to lift and return the crown upon his head, as if by that scornful play to make him feel more acutely the vanity of his former ambition. Pius the Second says, that the sculpture in the Cathedral of Orvieto, by artists of Sienna, representing the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the Saviour, the punishment of the damned, and the rewards of the elect, was worthy of Phidias or Praxiteles.\* The chants and lessons of the Church must not be separated from this visible development of the same truths which they announced, and assuredly the men who courted the influence of such objects and sounds could not be abandoned to impenitence or indifference. Moreover, independent of high intellectual causes, there is on mere moral grounds a close connection between affection for the ceremonies of faith and purity of heart, not to add even austerity of life: for the conscience of men of sensual or luxurious habits would be oppressed with so intolerable a sense of the inconsistency of their interior, with all that was submitted to their senses, that they would instinctively turn away from them. Whatever contributes to lower men in their ideas of the dignity of human nature, has a necessary tendency to cut off ceremonial from religious worship. When in the minds of men generally the type of animal is substituted for that of spiritual beauty, the foundation of the whole ritual is undermined, and the superstructure must inevitably fall. Then, indeed, are cowls, hoods, and chasubles, relics, beads, indulgences, but trumpery, only fitting embryos and idiots, and proper objects to be the sport of Milton’s scornful winds. Vice, as the arch leveller, is the true cause of the liturgy being despised. Who will invoke the saints, when he scorns their example? Who will pray for the dead, when he feels himself in mortal sin and incapable of performing any meritorious work to benefit himself? Who will believe in the real presence in the eucharist on earth, when he wishes that there should not be a God reigning in heaven? Who will venerate relics, when he has no faith in the virtue of the martyrs? and when he believes that the spirit with the body dies? Who will join the procession, when he seeks only the spectacle of vanity? The mass of mankind, indeed, are but little aware of the secret motive whether good or evil

\* Lib. IV. Comment.

which actuates them ; but unless the hunger and thirst for justice had been at least in the commencement experienced in some degree or other, we may be sure that the divine offices would never have been perpetuated or frequented. The reason why they seemed insipid to so many persons must be sought for in the abundance of external consolations which prevents them from feeling the want of interior. It is in the church that the words of the evening song are continually verified, that while the hungry are filled with good things the rich are sent empty away. Accordingly, without any premeditated intention of verifying such remarks, but merely from an accurate observation of facts, we find the writers of the middle ages ascribing generally in a continuous sentence, a desire of justice to those who evinced affection for the divine offices. Witness the words of Gaufridus, when speaking of Roger, Duke of Calabria, son of Robert Guiscard, who says, that he began to love just judgments, and to follow justice, and to frequent the church, assisting with devotion at the sacred hymns.\*

"You lovers of justice," says Gregory the Ninth to the citizens of Padua, "magnanimously defend the churches, and nourish them in the sweetness of liberty."† Many parts of the solemn ritual had also a close connection with the spirit and peculiar manners required by the Catholic religion, as innumerable instances might show. Where the love of comfort and corporal indulgence had superseded the love of sacrifice, men would not be inclined to stand during the long interval occupied by the chanting of the passion ; we should see them on that occasion following the Jews, "Et sedentes servabant eum." Where men were taught to forget the sacred humanity of our Lord, and the graces of his blessed mother, and not to feel that at each yearly commemoration of the passion, the scene was in a manner actually passing, in vain might the church demand "quis est homo qui non fletet ?" No tear would stand in any eye, but every one would be seen turning over mechanically the pages of his book in search of some new food for the insatiate craving of an empty mind. Certainly to a loaded conscience the rites would give no pleasure ; for every beauty in the Catholic Church is only beautiful from an analogy with the beauty of the soul : and without the remembrance of having traded with the talent entrusted to him, man would not be willingly reminded, though in strains of ever such sweet harmony, of righteousness and of judgment to come. "Our Lord," says Father Avila, "is accustomed to reward at his altars what has been done at a distance from them. Therefore, without a holy life in the world, you must not expect graces in the church."‡ "Te decet hymnus, Deus," says the Psalm. "But where ?" asks Cardinal Bona. In Sion : in Babylone : "non decet." Our hope is founded in that city of Jerusalem. He who sings with this hope, though his body may be in Babylon, in heart he may sing in Sion, saying, with the Apostle, "our conversation is in heaven," but he who is devoted to earthly desires, being an alien to sacred harmony, cannot sing hymns from the songs of Sion.§ But what skills it to seek

\* Sicilia Sacra, notit. I. 55. † Italia Sacra, V. 445. ‡ Epist. XL. § De divina Psalmod. 361.

proof where the adversary bears testimony against himself? The members of the earthly republic acknowledge that they find no pleasure in the offices of the Church. What is the unanimous complaint of the moderns, but that of the condemned spirits in Milton :—

———“ This must be our task  
In heav'n, this our delight ; how wearisome  
Eternity so spent in worship paid !”

The Catholic Church had not the Herculean festival of the Syracusans, the celebration of which was to be rendered compatible with their plans of sanguinary vengeance against the Athenians, when they proposed sending a perfidious false intelligence, to the unhappy Nicias, who was to be advised to postpone his departure till the next day by certain companions of Hermocrates, who were to visit his camp as friends, and give their counsel, that on the day following they might all be cut off. It would be idle to object an unpremeditated and accidental coincidence celebrated in the annals of retribution : all history attests that the Catholic festival was the harbinger of peace and charity, of forgiveness and amendment of life. “The oil of mercy,” says St. Ambrose, “shines in the solemnities of the Church.”\* In fact, he who was in mortal sin, and who should appear at the celebration of mass, without having the earnest desire to escape from that state was deemed guilty of a sacrilege and of adding sin to sin.

That part which is entitled the secret, is so called, not because said secretly, but because it used not to be said until those had retired who had no right to assist at the sacrifice. *Secreta a secerno.* Nay, even in the fifteenth century, persons whose manners were at open variance with the sanctity of the Christian law, used to provide for their being absent from home on Sundays, for they dared not appear at mass.†

“Let no Judas assist,” says St. John Chrysostom, “no Simon, no avaricious man. If any one be a disciple let him come, for he saith, *cum discipulis meis facio Pascha.*” Let no inhuman person approach, no cruel man, no unforgiving man, no impure person : this is the mystery of peace.” In the ages of faith, men knew nothing of a religion which merely consisted in being corporally present in the church during half an hour on festivals of obligation. “I beseech you,” says St. Chrysostom, “do not pay attention only to this, in what manner you come to the church, but see rather in what manner returning thence to your houses, you carry away the medicine which is proper for your infirmities ; if not all at the same time, at least let it be part to-day and part to-morrow, so that at length, you may secure it all.”‡

Of the Catholic nations in ages of faith we might assuredly say, in a high philosophic sense, and with far greater justice than was affirmed of the Athenians,

\* In Ps. 119.

† Monteil Hist. des François, Tom. IV. 375.

‡ Hom. 29. in Act



that they "knew no other feast besides that of doing what was right." *Καὶ μήτε ἑορτὴν ἄλλο τι ἡγεῖσθαι, ἢ τὸ τὰ δέοντα πράξει.\**

Clemens Alexandrinus remarks that the ancient sages required men to pray aloud, not from supposing that the Deity could not hear a silent prayer, but lest men should address prayers to heaven which they would be ashamed that other men should hear.† When men went out of Egypt they accordingly heard a language which they knew not. They came to the Catholic Church to beg temporal blessings. Pestilence is spreading terror into the ranks of the impious and brutish crew. For once they would cry for mercy to heaven. Lo the priest invites them : they begin to repeat the words of supplication, *Deus qui non mortem*—but why do they suddenly cease, why turn pale? Alas in what a dilemma do they find themselves ! They had forgotten that the Church in demanding temporal blessings, always implies that those who offer it are of the number either of the just or of the penitent, or of those who wish to have the grace of penitence, and now they feel themselves already rejected. Ah, well may their tongues falter and refuse to pronounce the words "*sed poenitentiam desideras peccatorum.*" They have no part in what follows, "*populum tuum ad te revertentem propitius respice,*" but the deprecation of that scourge of God's wrath must sound in their ears like the direful hymn of the avenging ministers, which enchains the soul and dries up the life in the veins :

*δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ—  
μικτός, αὐτῶν βροτούς.‡*

Again, the number of men who loved the sacred offices of the choir, is an index to determine the number of those who loved peace ; for who could love the assemblies of the faithful, and at the same time be glad that they should with each other war—

"And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet  
So oft in festivals of joy and love  
Unanimous ?"

That love argued too, that they cultivated habits of meditation, and that they gave themselves leisure,—that they knew well, though they had not heard Bacon, that although men should refrain themselves from injury and evil acts, yet the incessant and sabbathless pursuit of a man's fortune, leaveth not that tribute which we owe to God of our time.§ They suffered not mercantile industry to impoverish their souls, for they had learned to believe of their Creator, that not to irksome toil but to delight he made us, and delight to reason joined. The immoderate application of the moderns to material objects, is incompatible with the love of these offices, for, as the ascetic justly says, "*insipida fiunt omnia devota Christi mysteria convertenti se ad exteriora et inania :*"|| and, as he observes, "too much oc-

\* Thucyd. Lib. I. 71.

† Stromat. III. 26.

‡ Æschyl. Eumenid. 345.

§ Advancement of Learning.

|| Thom. à Kemp. Epist.

cupation in external things is a great impediment to internal, and cools men for things of heaven." "What avails it," says St. Bonaventura, "to observe a sabbath of one day, if we do not make our life a sabbath by reposing in God, and by seeking our peace in the love of his perfections? If our hearts are at the mercy of every worldly interest, we may suspend our manual labors on the seventh day, but we violate no less the great eternal covenant which binds our soul to God."\* "The very idea of prayer supposes leisure, for the parts of prayer," says a writer of the middle ages, "are preparation, reading, meditation, thanksgiving, oblation, petition. Preparation is twofold, remote and proximate. Remote, is the avoiding the occasion of distraction and the entrance of cares, or rather, it is the avoiding sins and a worldly habit of thought without the sanctuary. The proximate consists in the consideration of the divine Majesty, inspiring reverence and love."†

Lastly, the love for the divine offices was an evidence of the simple and noble manners which belong to a course of life in harmony with nature's laws; and, in fact, during the middle ages, the number was immense of those men of desire who seemed to experience, at the bottom of their hearts, a fainting and a mortal disgust, which nothing could relieve but the mysteries and ceremonies of faith associated with the spectacle, and meditation of nature. In the primitive church, mass used to be said before day, in order to avoid the violence of the Pagans; and even when there was no danger of interruption, we find the holy fathers inviting men to hasten to the church at the first light.‡ Similarly, in the foundations of masses made by devout lay persons during the middle ages, it is common to find the charters specifying that they are to be said at break of day.§ Philippe Augustus, in founding a daily mass for the soul of his father, Louis VII. specifies that it shall be said early in the morning, "*singulis diebus mane*:" adding, "in order that no occupations of the harvest time may interfere with the assistants." Vincent de Feore, of a noble and ancient family at Linas, founded a mass every Sunday, to be said in the church there after the second toll of the bell for matins, for the convenience of travellers.|| At four o'clock mass used to be said in the churches of London. We read that Madame de Chantal, in the regulation of her lord's castle of Bourbilly, provided that the mass of foundation in their chapel should be said at such an early hour every morning that the laborers, as well as the servants of the household, might assist at it before going to their work.¶ It was at six o'clock, at mass, on St. Ignatius day, that, for the first time, I saw the illustrious author of the *Martyrs and the Genius of Christianity*. Pasquier mentions in praise of the first president De Thou, that whereas his predecessors used to postpone prayers till the mass at ten o'clock, he, on the contrary, used always to hear mass the first thing on arriving at the palace of justice, where he was the first to

\* De Reformat. Hominis exter. Cap. 64.

† Instructio Novitiorum, Pars III. c. 2.

‡ Rheinwald Die Kirchliche Archæologie, 187.

§ Lebeuf Hist. du Diocese de Paris, VII. 36.

|| Id X. 191.

¶ Marsollier, I. 47.

arrive and the last to leave.\* The very title of the altare pigrorum, such as that in the cathedral of Paris where mass used to be said on Sundays at so late an hour as eleven,† is a sufficient indication of what was the general practice of the middle ages : and when to provide against unavoidable delays, there was granted a privilege to have mass said after the meridian, the complaints of abuse were all grounded on the same just views respecting the division of time. "It is impossible," says Sotus, "that such a regulation should not merit blame, which serves the purpose of those who convert the night into day, spending it over cups and dice, and similarly, the day into night, consuming it in sleep."‡

Christianity had renewed the face of the earth and had reconciled men to nature. The Sybarites of old, would not allow a cock to be in their city, lest it should disturb their matutinal slumbers ; but when Sybaris became an episcopal see, the symbol of vigilance rose over their highest towers, and there was no retreat within its walls so thickly screened as not to be accessible to the solemn echoes of the matin bell.

The laity, in the middle ages, would have wondered to hear of him described in Athenæus, who for twenty years had never seen the sun rise or set ; not because, like Hestineas, he had been leaning over his books, but through his luxury. We have no such portraits in chivalrous history or fable.

The twilight hour, and that beauteous vision of the setting sun, when its golden radiance illuminates the embrowned foliage, and fires the mountain's western side, were necessarily familiar to men who so loved the evening melody of the choir : and if the poet of the middle ages does not show his hero like Virgil's Æneas, when night and sleep leave him, rising up, and under the rosy light of the Eastern sky, repairing to the margin of rivers to invoke the nymphs, and pour water from his inverted palms, in honor of the naiads, he conducts him at the first dawn through laurel groves, and rocks fragrant with flowers, to the hermit's chapel, where sleeps the symbolic wave of spiritual purification.—Gyron le Courtois and his companion riding through a forest, stop for the night at a hermitage. Next morning, at the hour of joyous prime, Gyron was asleep as if he had not slept all the night, so his companion awoke him ; and when Gyron opened his eyes, and saw that the sun was already risen, he felt shame and said, "Sire, nous avons trop dormy." Then they mounted and rode away.§ The rule in Du Guesclin's time was to rise and sup at six, to dine and retire to rest at ten ; and the old verse added a promise of life being extended to ten times ten, as the consequence of its observance. Thus the Thucydidean expression, *περὶ πρῶτον ὕπνον*—the hour of first sleep—might have been then used in its original sense.

What lovely inspirations do the poets and painters of the middle ages derive from their familiarity with the morning ! Enter this pavilion on the terrace,

\* Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. VII. 10.

† Antiquités de Paris par Du Breul, Liv. I.

‡ Cited by Benedict XIV. De Sacrificio Missæ, Sect. II. 54.

§ F. XXVI.



which limits the garden of the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome. The fragrant air is cooled by a fountain which plays amidst the orange trees. Behold the ceiling, on which is painted that glorious Aurora of Guido! What golden mornings this great master must have enjoyed before he could have formed such a conception of that joyous and resplendent rising of the chariot of the sun over the craggy mountains and the deep blue sea! The moderns are in general of Addison's opinion, in preferring men of the middle hours of the day, whom he calls the worthier part of mankind—men in whose countenances you see that they are at home, and in quiet possession of the present instant as it passes; but in the scholastic romantic ages, men of desires, men of early hours, were rather deemed estimable. Learning and religion both claimed them as more especially their own. Those who were studious either of piety or of learning, yielded prompt obedience to the invitation of Divine Wisdom, "*Mane surgamus ad vineas! Videamus, si floruit vinea, si flores fructus parturiunt; si floruerunt mala Punica!*"\* and verified the fidelity of its promise, "*Qui manè vigilant ad me, invenient me.*"† Men who did not rise with the morning to study Wisdom, could not have hoped to hear a judgment in their favor when philosophy and religion had a voice. Even the poet of old would have reproved them—

—————"Et ni  
Posces ante diem librum cum lumine, si non  
Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis,  
Invidia vel amore vigil torquere."‡

Dear to men of desires, to men who thirsted after justice, was that hour when they sing, "*Jam lucis orto sidere:*" the joyous prime—as poets of the middle ages call it—that pure matutinal hour which succeeds the darkness, and which is followed by the day—sweet to the eye from both regards, from the splendor of its lightsome beams, and from the still lingering mysterious air of night. The former are only as yet seen upon the highest points; the scene below is still obscure. There sound the hasty feet of the pious supplicants, who repair to the churches. They seem to have known by instinct that it is their hour: at whose approach, as Shakespeare says,

"Ghosts, wandering here and there,  
Troop home to church-yards: damned spirits all,  
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,  
Already to their wormy beds are gone;  
For fear lest day should look their shames upon."

Full of religion is the delight which comes upon the soul with the balmy breath of hopeful morning! so beauteous from the solemn grey in which all things are still clad, and from the curious and orient color wherewith the rising sun embellishes the eastern part of the sky. If we would not degenerate below our species,

\* Cantic, VII. 12.

† Prov. viii. 17.

‡ Hor. Epist, I. 2.

and even unbirdly prove, we should rise to salute the dawn. Yes, there is a sweet delight in feeling one's self alone with nature, screened yet from day's garish eye. Who does not love the early morning walk, before that tribe of saunterers appear, men incapable of doing aught, yet ill at ease, with naught to do? The hour is all too soon for fashion's train.—

"Artists are her's, who scorn to trace  
Their rules from nature's boundless grace."

Little joy to them

"To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing, startle the dull night  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise."

But the tender sentiments of Catholic piety love the morning's prime, when, on his way aloft, the sun ascendeth with those stars that with him rose, when love divine first moved those its fair works; for then, with joyous hope, all things conspire to fill the soul. \* When the sun is in the heaven, and the proud day, attended with the pleasures of the world, is all too wanton, and too full of gauds, to give it audience, there is something that checks and repels devotional feeling. But when we have watched through the darksome canopy of forest paths the "fairest of stars, last in the train of night, if better it belong not to the dawn;" when we have observed the earth giving signs of gratulation, and each hill, and heard the joyous birds singing in their leafy homes, and felt the fresh gales and gentle airs, which waft odors through the woods,—then it is that the choral song sounds so truly ravishing, that we forget the reign of the body-world, of the prosaic world, which is, in fact, during these golden moments, at an end: all is spirit and intelligence—all is peace—the divine poesy of a sanctified and blissful existence.

Thus begins each day; and at noon one looks back to these first hours as if one had walked through Eden, and breathed the air of Paradise. One laments that it should not be always the dawn, and that Babylon should ever awake to recommence its wonted revels. It was so sweet to feel one's self existing without the presence of anything to distract or interrupt the peaceful transports, the bright visions, of the solitary soul. Then was removed the contagious spectacle of human vanity; the only glitter was from the golden crosses on the domes of temples, and from the lustrous beams which played upon the laughing wave. Then were hushed all the murmurs and discords of self-tormenting wretched men: one heard as it were the grateful song of youth, the hymn of nature, in primal innocence. How frequently has there been a divorce between nature and me; a momentary divorce! for I never felt that a reconciliation would be difficult. A little morning wind, a

\* Dante, Infer. I.

solitary wandering, a meadow or a wood, by sunrise, and between us all would be forgotten. It is these manners, belonging to the spirit of the Catholic religion, which enable men to repeat, with the conviction of experience, those encouraging words—"Repleti sumus mane misericordia tua : et exaltavimus, et delectati sumus omnibus diebus nostris."\*

So far we have considered the church offices in general. It remains for us, after the manner of the schools, to examine them in detail as connected with the seasons and festivals of the ecclesiastical year ; which is an investigation from which no writer can be dispensed, who undertakes to supply a history of Catholic manners during ages of faith, or to philosophize respecting the men of desires, who endured the long, but not unpleasant thirst.

---

## CHAPTER VII.



THE origin of the Christian festivals can be traced to the very cradle of the Church, although the exact and minute arrangement of the ecclesiastical year, as we now find it, was the gradual work of successive ages, which can never be said to be complete, inasmuch as the number of the eminent saints of God, who are the objects of commemoration, will not be complete until the end of this state militant on earth. "The devout Christian indeed," as St. Clemens Alexandrinus says of the Gnostic, "confines his adoration of God to no determined place, or festival, or day ; but through all his life, in every place, whether alone or with others, he worships him."† Yet the Church has always believed that the Apostles instituted the festivals, of which the mysteries had passed before their eyes ; in which number St. Augustin places the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. "We do not incur the crime of those who observed days and months," says St. Jerome, "by observing the festivals of our Lord and of the different martyrs, according to the traditions of particular countries ; but, lest a congregation of people without order should cause a diminution of faith in Christ, certain days are constituted for our assembling in common. Not that one day is more worthy, but that, by the spectacle of a multitude on an appointed day, a greater joy may arise."‡ For a long time before the actual establishment of the festival which commemorates the mysterious fiat, the holy fathers had taught, and the piety of the people had

\* Psalm lxxxix.

† Stromat. Lib. VII. 7

‡ Comment. in Ep. ad Galat. c. 4.



suggested, that the happy moment of the incarnation of the Word was the source of all the graces of our Redeemer, and the beginning of all the mysteries of our redemption. The annunciation was celebrated in the fifth century, on the same day as at present. The sacramentary of Pope Gelasius II. proves its establishment at Rome before the year 496. In England, from the introduction of Christianity till the Pontificate of Pius VIII. it was devoutly observed as a holy-day of obligation.

The first trace of advent discovered in history is the ordinance of St. Perpet, Bishop of Tours, at the end of the fifth century, in which he enjoins in his church a fast of three days each week from the feast of St. Martin to that of Christmas, which rule became general in France in the seventh century after it had been prescribed by the Council of Mâcon, for the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, adding that the offices should be celebrated as in Lent. In the ninth century, advent was of forty days in France, as appears from the capitularies of the kings, though it was not of absolute precept, since the canonical law only sanctioned what was observed by the piety of the people, who had made it a law to themselves. This continued to be observed by pious persons in the thirteenth century ; for it is expressly related of St. Louis, that he passed the forty days before Christmas in prayer and fasting : but the time of advent had then been limited to four weeks. In the time of St. Bernard, the order of Cluny was content with requiring a more rigid abstinence during advent, but without a fast.\* St. Chrysostom, towards the end of the fourth century, says that the nativity of our Lord had been celebrated on the twenty-fifth of December in the West for a long time, by an ancient tradition ;† and the Greeks and Easterns were the more anxious to conform to the custom of Rome, because that church must have known the day, since the acts of the famous capitation of Augustus were carefully preserved there.

The festival of the circumcision became solemn in the sixth century. The Council of Tours, in 566, ordains, that the chant of litanies should, on the first of January, be opposed to the superstition of the Pagans, and that the mass of the circumcision should be celebrated.

The festival of the purification is generally supposed to date from the time of Justinian ; but Pope Gelasius had certainly celebrated it in Rome thirty years before the accession of that Emperor. The procession of this day with lighted tapers, is one of the most ancient of those observed by the Church. The taper, thus solemnly blessed, as an emblem of the light of faith, was afterwards carried to the house of the person who bore it in the procession, that in the event of his being taken out of the world in the course of the year, it might serve him for that purpose at his death.

“*Domus dei pœnitendo præparatur.*” The institution of Lent has always been considered by the holy Fathers‡ as derived from apostolical tradition, though it

\* Hist. des Festes de l'Eglise, 8.

† Hom. XXXIII.

‡ S. Hieronymi Epist. XXVII.

was not till the middle of the third century that it was required by a law. On the first Sunday of Lent, as of advent, the ancient monks of the desert, and the fathers of the Carmelite order in later times, used to assemble and hear an exhortation from the superior, after which they would retire into the separated hermitages, in the depths of the wilderness. "For," say the Fathers, "while the solicitude of this life is exercised in various actions; and severity of discipline relaxed, the hearts even of the religious must become defiled with the dust of the world; and therefore this institution of mystic days is divinely provided to repair the purity of souls, and to open to them the gates of Paradise. Hence, so early as in the sixth century, it was a general custom during Lent to make a spiritual retreat."\* Thus the author of the *Life of the Abbot of St. Mary Bedanensis*, says, "But when, according to the custom of monks, the man of God, during Lent, used to live in his cell more secluded and more sparingly than usual, Lucretius used to visit him." So in the *Life of St. Cœmilian* we read, "It was the custom, during Lent, to be content with a solitary cell, and not to see any one, unless some person familiar, who used to bring the necessary food." We read of St. Francis spending Lent in an Island in the Lake of Trasimene. St. Senoch used to be secluded from the festival of St. Martin to the birth of Christ, and during the whole of Lent. St. Marculf, abbot of Nantes, used every year to retire into a certain island, where he remained secluded during Lent. Bishops used to make these retreats. Samson and Palladius are examples. The latter used during the holy season of Lent, to retire into an island of the sea for the sake of prayer, and to return to his people, who were expecting him in the church on Maunday Thursday; and St. Gregory of Tours relates of the prelate Bercundus, that he used to spend Lent in divine contemplation in a secret remote place. Bede says of Eadbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, that he used often to remain solitary, in a place remote from the church, where, on all sides, the roaring waves of the sea encompassed him; for he used to pass Lent in great penitence and prayer and weeping. The rules of Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz, prescribed to the canons, that during Lent they should never leave the cloister, except by necessity. St. John of Beverly, when a bishop, used during Lent to retire with some few religious men to devote himself to prayer and reading, in a secret spot in a grove, which was separated from his church by the river Tyne.

These solemn practices were no less in use with the laity, during the early and middle ages. It was to the people at large that St. Ambrose addressed these words at the beginning of Lent:—"Living in cities, let our minds be in the desert, that we may be refreshed with the celestial manna."† "Of what avail is your fast of Lent," asks St. Ambrose, "if at the same time you indulge in the luxury of hunting? It is a vain fast which debilitates the limbs, and does not free the soul from perdition. Do you suppose that he fasts, who at the first dawn does not watch in the church, and visit the holy places of the blessed martyrs, but rising up, gathers

\* Mabillon, *Præfat. in 1 Sæcul. Benedict.* § 9.

† *Serm. XXIII. de Quad.*

his little servants, who were perhaps hastening to the church, arranges his nets, and speeds to the woods and mountains, spends the entire day in hunting, and pursues the game with such ardor, as if the fast was ordained in order that he might hunt? We prescribe abstinence to the body, in order that the soul may refrain from vices; but what room is left to such a man for devotion and prayer? Is he not angry or elated according as he succeeds in the chase? Is he not severe and cruel to his servants, forgetting that they are Christians and his brethren—men who have put on Christ, and participated in the same sacraments?"\*\*

During the middle ages, the laity of all ranks devoted this season of the year to retirement and prayer. Thus did Alfred and Robert, and many other kings of England and France. "These are days which we ought to observe," says St. Bernard, "days full of piety and grace, on which the minds even of wicked men are moved to penitence: for such is the power of the sacraments administered on these days, that they can rend even hearts of stone, and soften iron breasts."† By the statutes of the holy Abbot Adalard, in the year 822, among the days on which all persons belonging to the service of the monastery of Corby were to be exempted from labor, was the first day of Lent, in order that they might have time for renewing their confessions:‡ and the very title of Shrovetide in England indicates that this practice was general among the people. "During Lent, we must meditate day and night," says St. Cæsarius of Arles, "and fill our hearts with the sweetness of the divine law. If any one should be so much occupied as to be unable to attend to the divine Scriptures before his repast, let it not shame him to hear something read from them while he is at table."§

St. Basil, in the fourth century, speaks of Lent as follows:—"There is no church, no continent, no city, no nation, no corner of the earth ever so remote, in which this fast is not proclaimed. Armies, travellers, sailors, merchants, though far from home, every where hear the solemn promulgation and receive it with joy. Let no one exclude himself from the number of those who fast, in which all men of every age, of whatever rank and dignity, are comprised. Angels draw up the list of them that fast. Take care then that your angel put down your name: desert not the standard of your religion." We read in the Saxon chronicle that in 640, Erkenbert, King of Kent, who overturned all the idols in the kingdom, the first of English kings, appointed a fast before Easter.|| In the time of Chrodogang, Bishop of Metz, there were three Lents regularly observed by the faithful people, namely, before the Paschal feast, before the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and before Christmas, at which times the laity went to confession and communion, and as the bishop adds, "qui plus fecerit, melius facit."¶ In fact, during the middle ages there was more danger of giving scandal by requiring too little than by imposing too burdensome an obligation.

\* S. Ambrosii Serm. XXXIII

† S. Bernardi in Cœna Domini Serm.

‡ Statuta Antiqua Abbatiae S. Petri Corbeiensis apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IV.

§ August. Append. S. 140. || 37. ¶ Mabillon, Præfat. in III. Sæcul. Bened. 6.



Petrarch, whose ordinary diet was fruit and herbs after the fortieth year of his age, used to fast every Friday on bread and water. St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, used to eat nothing on Friday but dry bread and water; and in the chronicles of chivalry, the same practice is ascribed to several renowned knights. In the twelfth century, the laity of all ranks led as abstemious a life as many religious congregations. Peter the venerable Abbot of Cluny, proposes their example in this respect even to the monks of his order. "These men," saith he, "abstain from flesh for the sake of God every Saturday. The majority of the laity abstain similarly every Wednesday, and some of them even every Monday; whereas the monks of Cluny, in many places, observed only the abstinence of Friday."\* So strictly was Lent observed in early times, that we find St. Ambrose saying, that if we should omit abstinence for a single day, we should violate the entire Lent.† During the middle ages, we learn how rigidly it was observed, from what St. Bernard says, "I beseech you, dearly beloved, receive with all devotion this Lenten fast, which not only the abstinence commends, but much more the sacrament. How can that be burdensome to us which the universal Church bears along with us? Hitherto we used to fast only till nones; now, like ourselves all kings and princes, clergy and people, nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, all together fast until vespers. I do not ask what monk, but what Christian will not observe this fast devoutly?"‡ Till the twelfth century, the fast of Lent was never broken before the evening, though at other times it was usual to take the meal after nones. Not even water could be drank excepting at the same time of the repast. What was saved by fasting was to be given to the poor. Abstinence from all usual pleasures was also required, but on the Sunday Laetare there was a certain intermission of this austerity. In the baronial, as well as in the episcopal hall, there was always a Calendar suspended, in which was marked in great letters, the fasts of Lent, and Advent, and the vigils and ember days, with the abstinences of other times. In the Limousin it was usual on Ash Wednesday, to place over the chimney a tablet, composed of as many letters as there are days in Lent, and every evening one letter used to be effaced. The inscription was "*Mors imperat regibus, maximis, minimis, denique omnibus.*" Thus at Easter, the whole was effaced. Monteil gives a curious document which proves that meagre dinners in the middle ages were really such. The account-book of Master James Bernard, of the expenses of the hotel of the king, in the year 1536, mentions having paid William du Moussay, the king's cutler, for two knife cases, each holding six knives, all pointed, to serve at table on meagre days. King Charles V. and Charles VIII. had leave to take milk and cheese in Lent, on the ground of their bad health, but to make amends they were to perform some pious works. The Xerophagie, or foods consisting of dry fruits uncooked, which is now reserved for the last week, was of common

\* S. Petri Ven. Abb. Clun. Epist. Lib. VI. 15.

† De Quadrag. Serm. XXIII.

‡ Id. Serm. III.

usage, and is the most ancient of all modes of fasting ; but it was never prescribed to the Western Church, excepting on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The custom of marking bread with a cross on certain days is of great antiquity. St. Gregory the Great says, that it was the custom to sign the penitential bread with a cross, so that it might be divided into four equal parts ;\* and in the time of St. Benedict, the bread of four pounds being thus signed, was divided among four monks.† Machiavel does not esteem it beneath the dignity of his great history to relate, that when the Duke of Milan came to Florence with all his court, they gave an example of scandal that had never before been seen, for it being the season of Lent, without any respect for God or for the Church, none of the court observed *maigre*, and all fearlessly amused themselves at public spectacles.‡ By decrees of Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian, criminal trials were suspended during the whole of Lent.§ The celebration of Palm Sunday is very ancient, and traced from Palestine, whence it spread through the East, till in the sixth century it was established in the West. In the fifth, the monks and solitaries who had retired into the depths of the desert, after the Epiphany, for whose sake the deacon used to announce after the Gospel on that day at what precise time the Church of God would celebrate Easter, which custom still prevails, used always to return to their monastery to celebrate Palm Sunday, a festival which the Church hastily concludes to return to the passion. The Saturday preceding was called, "*Sabbatum vacans*," because the Pope was then occupied in giving alms to the poor of Christ, and in celebrating the "*Mandatum*," and, therefore, the day had no proper office.||

Why the moderns should speak of former ages in terms of such disdainful pity on account of the importance which was attached to the universal celebration of Easter at a determined period, it would be hard to guess, if we were not accustomed to see proofs of their hatred for unanimity and order under every circumstance and in all conceivable relations. St. Ambrose, writing upon the right time of Easter says, "Let us not fear to incur the reproach of the apostle, as if we were observers of lunar times. For it is one thing to observe, like Gentiles, at what age of the moon any work ought to be begun, that the fifth should be shunned, and that various days, particularly the latter, ought to be noted as unfavorable;¶ and it is another thing to have regard with a devout mind to that day of which we read, '*Hic est dies quem fecit dominus*.' This time we ought especially to know, in which throughout the whole world, the prayer of that sacred night is offered up to God."\*\* Hippolytus, a bishop in the time of the Emperor Alexander, is said to have been the first to write a paschal cycle, which was afterwards improved by Prosper of Aquitaine and St. Cyrill, of Alexandria.†† Philosophers still gaze with astonishment at the

\* Dial. Lib. 1. c. 2.

† Hist. Casinensis, Sæc. III.

‡ Hist. Lib. VII.

§ In L. Quadrag. L. VI. de feriis.

|| Durandus Rationale, Lib. VI. 66.

¶ See Aristoph. Nubes, 1131. \*\* S. Ambros. Epist. Lib. X. 83. †† Isidori Etymol. Lib. VI.

complicated machinery of the vast clocks of the middle ages which are found in cathedrals and abbey churches, as that of Strasbourg, in which are described astronomical laws connected with the ecclesiastical course by the movement of a wheel which makes its revolution in a year, and the golden number, the dominical letter, the movable feasts and the bissextile year, by means of another, which only revolves once in a century. The Ascension, one of the four most ancient festivals of the Church, has always been regarded as of apostolic institution. St. Augustin says, that it was celebrated throughout the whole world. Though with extraordinary pomp observed on the Mount of Olives, its solemn celebration was universal in the middle ages. We find St. Gregory VII. taking off the interdict which the monastery of Monte Casino had incurred, and stating his motive to be lest such a religious place should be deprived of the sacred offices on the approaching solemnity of the Ascension, which is venerable, adds the pontiff, throughout the whole world.\* The festival of Pentecost was the fourth of these great solemnities which completed the commemoration of the chief events connected with the mysteries of human redemption; for the festival of the Trinity, which was not established at Rome nor in France till the fourteenth or fifteenth century, was not precisely included under that head.†

In the institution of the festival of Corpus Christi, the Church explains her own views in the lesson which is read during the octave from the sermon of St. Thomas of Aquin, which says, "It is agreeable to the devotion of the faithful, solemnly to celebrate the institution of so salutary and admirable a sacrament, that we may venerate in the visible sacrament the ineffable mode of the divine presence, and that the power of God may be praised, which operates so many wondrous works in the same sacrament; as also that for so salutary and so sweet a benefit thanks as most due may be offered to God." Next in solemnity followed those anniversaries of our blessed Lady, which had not been of necessity comprised in the former. The festival of the Assumption is clearly distinguished in the sixth century, and that of the Nativity was from early times one of the three birthdays which the Church celebrated, for to the precursor had been extended that honor which he shared with her and our divine Lord. St. Augustin says, that the faithful had received by tradition from the ancients the observance of the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and, indeed, the Council of Agde, in 506, reckons it the first festival after those of the chief mysteries of our redemption: but that of St. Peter and St. Paul may be considered as of the highest antiquity and solemnity. Until a late epoch the birth of St. John the Baptist and the festivals of the Apostles, were holidays of obligation throughout Christendom. The invocation of the saints, as a means by which the names of all those who have been recommended to their prayers may be recorded in the book of blessed predestination, is a devotion coeval with Christianity, and that the anniversaries of their martyr-

\* *Historia Cassinens. Sæc. VI. 2.*

† *Baillet, Traité des Fêtes Mobiles, Tom II.*



doms were observed in the first ages is an incontrovertible fact of history. To primitive times may be traced the cause and form of canonization. There were two opposite heresies respecting martyrdom : that of the Gnostics and Valentinians, who pronounced it to be useless and injurious to God, and that of the Marcionites who exposed themselves to it, through hatred of the flesh, the creation of which they ascribed to the bad principle. Therefore, when any one suffered death for being a Christian, an examination was instituted to ascertain whether he had entertained such errors, or were truly a martyr, and this is the origin of canonization.\* St. Clement had established seven notaries in different quarters of Rome, who were to write down the acts of the martyrs on their trials before the tribunals. We see that from the fourth century, the acts of martyrs in distant regions, used to be transmitted to the Roman Pontiff. "Ut moris erat," is the expression when a transmission of this kind is recorded to have been made from Trent, under the consulship of Stilico.

The Fathers of the Council of Cloveshoe, in 747, decreed, that through the course of the whole year, the nativities of the saints should be celebrated with appropriate psalmody on the same day as is prescribed in the martyrology of the Roman Church. Certainly in rejecting the authority of the Gregorian Calendar, it was hard to believe that the nations which embraced the new opinion, were actuated by a sincere desire of exercising greater caution in matters of religion, when we find them resolved to accept men as saints and martyrs on the strength of quaint emblems and devices, begged, as Milton said, from the old pageantry of some twelfth-night's entertainment at Whitehall. Mabillon shows the great caution which was always exercised by the Roman Pontiffs with respect to the canonizing of saints, and even the zeal of councils in repressing the devotion of the people where there were not sufficient grounds to justify it.† The celebration of their anniversaries over their shrines is repeatedly mentioned in the oldest authors. Speaking of the relics of St. Stephen, St. Augustin says, "A little ashes collects such a multitude. Consider, beloved, what God reserves for us in the land of the living, when he attaches such benefits to the dust of the dead."‡ It is an historical fact, that the maxim universal with the fervent Christians of ages when men prayed for the dead invoked the saints and celebrated their anniversaries, was this, "nihil nisi quod traditum est." This one fact is sufficient to show the impossibility of such doctrines having first sprang up in the second century, as the modern innovaters affirmed. In the second act of the Council of Chalcedon, the Fathers cried out, "Flavian lives after death, 'martyr pro nobis oret.'" Therefore, at the time of the Council of Chalcedon, the custom of invoking the saints prevailed ; and what then becomes of the Protestant resolution to subscribe to the first four Councils, those of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon ? "At that table of the

\* Benedict. XIV. De Canonizatione Servorum Dei, Lib. I. c. 2, 3.

† Præfat. in V. Sæcul Bened. § 6.

‡ Sermon. CCCXVII.

Lord," says St. Augustin, "we do not commemorate the martyrs in the same manner as others who rest in peace, that we should pray for them, but rather that they should pray for us that we may follow their footsteps."\* St. Augustine refutes the calumnies of the Manichæans, who accused the Catholics of adoring dead men.† The feast of All Saints instituted partly to make amends for the unavoidable omission of many in the course of the year, it being impossible to celebrate a festival specially to each of such a multitude,‡ was established in the reign of Louis-le-Debonnaire, Pope Gregory IV. being in France in the year 835, and exhorting him to order its celebration throughout his states. All-hallow-tide comprises three successive days, devoted to great mysteries, the vigil of All-Saints which is a solemnity of affliction, the festival itself, which is a day of joy, and the day of All Souls, which is a day of prayer.§ There were other seasons of devotion which seemed belonging more especially to a sphere of tender mysticism, such as those in honor of the holy cross, or commemorating local instances of mercy which the Church had thought proper to adopt for the general edification of her children, such as the rogations, instituted in the fifth century by Mamercus, Bishop of Vienne, at a time of general alarm, in consequence, as Sidonius Apollinaris, Bishop of Clermont, relates, of flames bursting out from the crests of mountains, while the walls were shaking by trembling of the earth, in which passage, as also in a sermon of St. Avitus, some natural philosophers have seen evidence of the existence at that time of volcanic eruptions in Auvergne, of which the traces are so evident.||

The Church appointed the parts of the holy Scriptures which ought to be read at the different seasons of the year, and these divine lessons were presented to the faithful as of the greatest importance. Pope Gelasius arranged the order for the whole circle of the year. The Book of Kings, and those of Solomon and Job, were read after Pentecost till September; and then followed lessons from Tobias, Judith, Esther, Esdras, and the Books of Maccabees? thence till the nativity of our Lord the Books of Prophets were read, in order that men might be prepared for the coming of Christ. From the Nativity till Septuagesima, the New Testament was read, and the Epistles of St. Paul. From Septuagesima till Easter, days of penance and lamentation, the histories of ancient misery were related, from which we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. During the Paschal time, the apocalypse of the blessed John, and the canonical Epistles were proposed, that the contemplation of the last times might prepare us for our end. The Council of Carthage sanctioned the reading of the passion of the martyrs in the church on the days of their anniversary. Pope Adrian decreed, that such lives of the Fathers as were composed by uncertain authors

\* Tractat. in Joan. LXXXIV.

† Cont. Faust. Manich. Lib. XX. c. 21.

‡ Durandus Rationale, Lib. VII. 34.

§ Durandus, VII. 35.

|| Sidon. Apoll. Ep. V. 14; VII. 1. S. Aviti Homil. de Rogationibus.

were not to be read. The first who ordained in Italy this distinction of books from the Old and New Testament, was St. Elucadius, Archbishop of Ravenna, who died in the year of our Lord 112. Charlemagne, as Sigebert relates in his chronicle, caused to be compiled by Paul, the deacon, certain lessons from the writings of the Catholic fathers, suited to each festivity, which were to be read in the churches during the year. St. Benedict prescribed that nothing should be read but the lessons of the Old and New Testament, with expositions from the most celebrated doctors and fathers of the church.

Such then was the course of the ecclesiastical year ; such were its various stages and divisions ; and methinks, before proceeding farther, here is enough to make one exclaim, with the philosopher of ancient Rome, "*Verum admirabilis compositio disciplinæ incredibilisque rerum traxit ordo, quem nonne miraris ?*"\* We may even remark, that not without a clear insight into the profoundest depths of the philosophy of life was it so arranged : for in this circle of the Church's seasons was comprised the circle of spiritual progress—the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive life, from the expiations of Advent, when the ecclesiastical year commenced, to the joys of the festival of All Saints, when it ended. The genius which presided over the whole arrangement of the ecclesiastical order, like that which constituted the noblest artists, a Titian and a Haydn, chiefly attended to the harmony of the whole together, and had more regard to the general effect than to the details.

Who has not remarked what a sweet poetic charm this divine course imparted to the different seasons of the few years allotted to mortals ? who has not been struck with the afflicting contrast which is presented, if we turn from it to consider how they have been characterized in heathen or modern times ? The Eleans used always to send *feciales*, heralds of the season, to the different states of the Peloponnesians. With the ancients in general, heralds were always styled a race hated of men ; and assuredly, as far as relates to this particular office, those who supply their place in modern society, discharge a service which is in no way indicative of tender affection for humanity.

In a country where the Newmarket or judicial calendars have superseded the Gregorian, it may be truly said that wretched men only measure time like the ancients, by the sad calends ; † for as far as real gladness of heart is concerned, there is not much difference between the spectacle of vanity and the punishment of the unjust. Significantly used the Prætors of Sicily to date the spring from the first flowering of the rose, for the emblem of luxury had no slight accordance with a cruel and oppressive administration. In the middle ages, the spring and autumn were associated in the minds of the people with the glorious festivals of the annunciation and of St. Michael. The memory of these days, indeed, is still preserved among the nations from which the Catholic faith has been removed ; but what

\* Cicero de Finibus, III. 22.

† Hor. Sat. I. 3.



different feelings do they revive! and of what an opposite nature from those of faith are the exercises which they require! Whatever may have been the customs associated with them, in the estimation of our Catholic ancestors, they were days not of payment but of deliverance—not of trembling before an earthly judge, but of triumphing in the belief of a celestial Protector, bringing with them not insolvency and consignment to gaols, but works of union and the offerings of a grateful and overflowing heart; and O what a difference between beholding or enduring man's oppression, and commemorating, with hymns of transport, heaven's mercy! Between the inhuman severity of rich men to the poor, and the tender mysteries which redeem a world!

True, nature has her calendar, to con which with curious sense is no unpleasant task to those who love her. There is a quiet and an exquisite delight in watching for the swallow and the nightingale, to announce the return of beautiful days and serene nights—"for the turtle, and the swallow, and the stork, know the time of their coming, though Israel knoweth not the judgments of the Lord;" but must it not have been more impressive, more grateful to all the sentiments of humanity, nay more poetical, to have their approach announced by the sweet and solemn hymns of the holy church? The storms of equinox seem grander and more terrible things when associated with the festival of the archangel and the vigil of the dead. That winter itself may be loved, has been shown by poets who sung the delights of the beautiful season;\* but methinks the snows of December and the beauteous flowers of the genial summer, can impart to the imagination a higher as well as a more exquisite tone when they are considered in connection with the crib of Bethlehem and the eve of St. John.

When St. Theresa arrived at Salamanca, it was on the vigil of All Saints, of the year 1570. Here she was lodged in the house which had been procured for the new convent which she was about to found. It was now deserted and in disorder: during the night between the festival of All Saints and the day of the dead, finding herself alone with only one sister, in the vast apartments of this house, but half furnished and imperfectly secured, lying upon some straw, which was always her first furniture, it is said that she suffered much from the fears of her companion. The incessant and mournful sound of the bells, and the remembrance of the lugubrious festival which was to follow, gave to that night a certain wild and poetical charm, which the interval itself, however favorable to romantic impressions, could scarcely have imparted.

Charlemagne, in giving German titles to the months of the year, named December Heiligenmond, in reference to the festival of Christmas; and we find, during the middle ages, that the same spirit of reverence with all its associations, connected with the mysteries of faith, characterized the whole development of the popular mind in its minutest detail. Sailors used to speak of the Cyprian star,

\* Erycius Puteanus de Laudibus Hiemis, Virg. Georg. I.

alluding to the feast of St. Cyprian, about which time the seas were generally tempestuous, and for the same reason mariners, in Catholic nations, still speak of the star of St. Simon and St. Jude, and St. Catherine and of St. Andrew, for these days are in a stormy season.\* The poorest rustics were as familiar with the course of the ecclesiastical year as the most learned monk. In little country churches of France, I have observed tablets which used to be removed every Sunday, stating the saint who was to be commemorated each day of that week, and this was conformable to an express prescription ; for in the council of Sens in 1460, it is enacted that there should be a tablet suspended in the church, stating what was to be read or sung each day during the week, that every one might be duly prepared,† for nearly every day was “distinguished in the beautiful order of things.” In Spain and Portugal, and Italy, the poor beggars in soliciting alms, are always heard to beseech the saint of the day to obtain a blessing on the passer, especially if it be in the vicinity of a church placed under his invocation.

The arrival, indeed, of the great anniversaries, was an event of such solemnity that it was made to determine the whole course of human affairs, which from the eighth century, in the diplomas of Pontiffs and other acts, were dated according to the number of years which had elapsed from the incarnation of our Lord. ‡ It was on these occasions alone that kings wore their crowns. Even William the Conqueror conformed to this usage, wearing his crown but thrice in the year : on the Easter festivals at Winchester, on Whit Sunday at Westminster, and on Christmas Day at Gloucester. What a thrilling sense does the mind experience at the announcement of any of the great seasons of the ecclesiastical year, made on the eve preceding ! How many smite their breast, how many feel their eyes dissolved at the recollections which it awakens ! At that moment, too, who is not reminded forcibly, that another wave of time’s stream has wafted him nearer to the great ocean of eternity on which his frail bark will inevitably so soon be driven. But faith brings hope when nature would only find infinite mourning. Personal recollections are therefore dismissed, and, at that moment, all nations and the people of every clime, all the men on earth who compose the mystical body of Christ, are occupied with the same thoughts, and providing, as the church says, “that appropriate honors should precede the coming solemnities of their redemption.” At Cluny, on the announcement of the festival of the Nativity, it was the custom to fall prostrate on the ground, to adore God for this mystery of grace.

How, let us proceed to ask, were these festivals celebrated ? In the first place, they were always preceded by a vigil, which was observed as a fast, and that on two accounts : the one symbolical, the other practical, with a view to positive advantage. The former is explained in a few words by Father Diego de Stella. “In the feasts of the saints,” he says, “the vigil cometh ever before the feast day, because

\* *Macri Hierolexicon a Cypriana.*

† *Concil. Senonens. cap. i. apud Dacher. Spicilleg. Tom. II.*

‡ *Cantelius Hist. Eccles. Metropolit. Pars. Dissert. i. c. 8.*

they did always in this world fast and take pains, and, therefore, afterwards they must feast and be merry for ever. The worldly manner is quite contrary—they do first eat and make merry, and then after they do pay their scot, death cometh and maketh the reckoning for them.”\* “Multi tristantur post delicias, convivia, dies festos.” After the world’s festivals come sorrow and melancholy, and the blessed Dionysius, the Carthusian, says, “There is this difference between the good and the evil, that the latter wish to make a feast before the vigil, rejoicing temporally in this world, and therefore in the future world, they make the vigil for the feast which they made here weeping eternally.† The practical reason for the vigil consisted in the effects which it produced in preparing the mind for the due celebration of the succeeding festival. “The feasts of the saints were preceded by votive fasts, because, (as St. Bernard says,) in many things we offend all; and it was not deemed safe by our fathers to undertake the celebration of any holy festival without endeavoring, by previous purification and abstinence, to be made more worthy and capable of spiritual joys.”‡

The abstinence of Saturday to which, as well as to Lent, St. Jerome ascribes an apostolic origin, and the cause of the non-observance of which, by the monks of the east, is explained by Cassian,§ was not only deemed decorous on the day when the church celebrates the sad repose of Jesus Christ in the sepulchre, and the sorrows of his blessed mother—that time, as Ives de Chartres says, “which seems to be an interval between sadness and joy,” but it was also regarded as a useful provision to secure the early rising and the serene unclouded mind, which were required for the due sanctification of the Lord’s day. Even the ancients could discern the advantage of this discipline, as when Horace says,

—————“Quin corpus onustum  
Hesternis vitiis animum quoque prægravat una,  
Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ,”

and Milton furnishes an example of its effects when he represents Adam early waked, adding,

—————“So custom’d for his sleep  
Was airy light, from pure digestion bred,  
And temperate vapors bland.”

Abbot Cosmas used to stand singing psalms and praying all night in the church and in his cell, from Saturday night till after sunrise and the end of the canon on Sunday morning.¶

“Be not ungrateful to our Lord Jesus; lament not that you fast, but weep rather that you fast so seldom. He who does not compassionate Jesus, hath not known Jesus; he who rejects fasting, knows not the cross.”—These are the words of St.

\* On the Contempt of the World, I. 108.

† B. Dionysii Carthus. Amat. Mundi Specul.

‡ In Vigilia S. Andreæ, Serm.

§ Lib. II. c. 10.

¶ Sat. Lib. II. 2.

¶ Sophronius Pratum Spirit. cap. 87.



Chrysostom : and Drexelius says that abstinence is the most noble of disciplines among Christians.\* These two points, therefore, fasting and abstinence, as closely connected with the spirit and manners of the middle age—as they are widely at variance with those which prevail at present—are entitled to a distinct place in the moral history of that period which we are attempting to supply.

The ecclesiastical discipline of the primitive ages, seemed a less formidable thing to the Gentiles, than it appears to the moderns, with the greater part of whom it would be of far more importance to establish, if possible, the immortality of the organs that minister to corporeal life, than to prove the external existence of the soul. The ancient Greeks and Romans were content, on ordinary occasions, with one meal in the day, which they called *cœnam*. Isidore says that they were not accustomed to take the *prandium*.† Cicero, in the *Tusculans*, and Clemens Alexandrinus, in his *Pedagogue*, relate the saying of Plato, that men ought to be ashamed to saturate themselves twice a day. In the time of Hippocrates there seems to have been no certain rule, though generally but one meal used to be taken in the day. Eustathius says that they ate thrice. The first was *jentaculum*, ἀκράτισμα, which was merely bread dipped in wine. Then followed the *prandium*, the *merenda*, and the *cœna*. No certain hour is assigned for the *merenda*. The *prandium* was taken at mid-day ; the *cœna* in the evening. Yet with the heathens, living and eating were synonymous,

“ Sufficit, in sextam labor horam, deinde sequentur  
Ut vivas numeri : littera ζῆθι monet.”

For the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth hours in the Greek were denoted by the letters Z. H. Θ. I. which form the word ζῆθι, signifying live : a conceit which may almost remind one of the language of the moderns, who revere the canon, “beneficium propter officium.”

In instituting the different fasts and days of abstinence throughout the year, the Church, besides the particular motive of preparation for her solemn festivals, had in view the general object of forming men to holy manners, and also to a condition conformable to the mysteries which she had received. “There are men,” says St. Chrysostom, “who seem to have come into the world only for pleasure, and that they might fatten this perishable body ; as if their sole business in life were to prepare for the worms of the tomb a more abundant and succulent pasture. At the sight of their luxurious table the angels retire—God is offended—the demons rejoice—virtuous men are shocked—and even the very domestics scorn and laugh ; but on beholding a simple and modest table, the Deity, angels, and men applaud—good men sit down to it—Christ himself, during his mortal life, took his place at a similar table. Such was that of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and of the just men who are gone before. They left sumptuous feasts to tyrants, and to men enriched by crime, who were the scourges of the world.”‡ Thus, in her

\* De Jejuniis, Lib. I c. 3.

† Isidore. I. 20, Orig. cap. 2.

‡ Hom. VI.

penitential season, the Church prays that “the dignity of human nature, wounded by excess, may be reformed by attention to medicinal temperance,” and that “purified by a holy fast, men may arrive, by the grace of God, with sincere minds at the festivals to come.” In fact, while the setting apart two days every week for abstinence, gave the involuntary slaves of the earthly republic a chance of escape from an uninterrupted round of Syracusan tables, destructive of health, as well as of intellectual and innocent enjoyments, the obligation of devoting forty successive days to a course of privation, tended to secure their total and permanent deliverance; for by obedience to this law, men were imperceptibly emancipated from the chains of custom, and even of necessities which had been thought to have become a part of their constitution; habits of effeminacy were broken through, and the general character was rendered manly, by means of the salutary edurance of privation. The objection grounded on the severity of fasts, and the supposed injury caused to the human frame by abstinence, proves nothing but that the persons who produce it are accustomed to a life of constant repletion—which by Pagans would have been deemed disgraceful—and that they are, in point of sensuality, if not of heroism, of the mind of Ulysses, who says to Alcinous,

ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν δορπῆσαι ἐάσατε, κηδόμενον περ,  
οὐ γάρ τι στυγερῇ ἐπὶ γαστέρι κυντερον ἄλλο  
ἔπλετο, ἦτ' ἐκέλευσεν ἔο μνησασθαι ἀνάγκη.\*

But if fasting be considered in relation to medicinal discipline, its effects will be found favorable to the enjoyment of good spirits and of the free play of the mind, which necessarily conduces to the body's health, and that habit even renders it agreeable to the animal nature, is a fact that the sacred Scripture itself condescends to attest, saying, “Etiam ipsis jejuniis convivii dat gratiam dulciores post famem epulæ fient.”† Cicero remarks the power of custom in this very point. “Aniculæ (says he) sæpe in ediam biduum aut triduum ferunt. Subduc cibum unum diem athletæ; Jovem Olympium eum ipsum, cui se exercebit, implorabit: ferre non posse clamabit.”‡

It was, however, no doubt, chiefly in consideration of moral consequences, that the Church regarded this law of fasting and abstinence as so important. The penitential season or the vigil, succeeding within moderate intervals, by reducing men's minds to a placid and serene state, disposed them for the principles of the Catholic religion during the rest of the year; whereas men who never experienced such privations, were morally, and even physically speaking, ripe for apostasy, because the passions are by corruption protestors against the law of God in every relation, and as it were, the natural enemies of the symbols and life of faith. Our Saviour chose not only to fast, but also to suffer the pain consequent upon fasting; which theologians remarked, to show the vanity of many of the pretexts for dispensations adduced by tepid disciples, to whom they applied the

\* Od. VII. 215.

† Judith, cap. I. 2.

‡ Tuscul. II.

words of the Psalm. "In labore hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur. Ideo operi sunt iniquitate." The modern complaints respecting the injury sustained by the body in consequence of the discipline of the church, may suggest a painful comparison in reference to the heroism of the heathen sage, who, on being warned by Crito that he ought not to heat himself by continuing his discourse in proof of the soul's immortality, for that the executioner who was to administer the poison, had said that he ought to speak as little as possible, since the act of speaking would render his body in a state to resist the action of the poison for a long time, which would involve him in great additional suffering, for it might become necessary to drink it twice, or even thrice, replied only, "Do not trouble me with that man's advice: let him attend to his duty, and prepare to give me the poison twice, or if necessary, thrice. Change the subject."\*

But if the advantage of fasting be admitted, surely, says the modern Hercules, you must admit that the obligation of abstinence was eminently superstitious and absurd! *Δειπνεῖν με δίδασκε*, would generally be a suitable answer to such an appeal.† Manzoni, however, shows more condescension, and says in reply, "The Church intends to give no precept which does not prescribe an action in itself virtuous, which does not conduce to purify, elevate, sanctify the soul, and in short, to dispose men for the accomplishment of the divine law."‡

In prescribing occasional abstinence from flesh, as being an incentive to concupiscence, the Church did not sanction luxury in other kinds of food. "There are some observers of Lent," says St. Augustine, "more luxurious than religious, seeking rather new delights than chastising ancient lusts. They fast, not to temper their customary excess, but rather that by delay they may feel more immoderate greediness."§ This was not to revere, but to mock the Church. She warned men from deceiving themselves by seeking more precious food under pretence of abstaining from the flesh of animals. "Restringendæ sunt deliciæ, non mutandæ," was her admonition.|| During these intervals, when it could be done with justice, she desired that the rich might live like the poor; might for once suffer the labors of men; that having sinned with men, as St. Bernard says, they might for once be scourged with them, that there might be less ground to fear that they would be scourged with demons:¶ for that is the real secret of innumerable parts of her holy discipline. Indulgences, however, within the limits of permitted food, did not constitute a violation of the ecclesiastical law, though, by the consent of all theologians, it deprived men of the merit.\*\* To witness the astonishment of the moderns whenever the wisdom of that law is defended, one might suppose that all men resembled the people of Beauvaisis and of Olonne, who would exchange, it used to be said, with greediness, an ox for a fish; and that the Shakespearian definition of an honest man was verified by universal experience. But without any

\* Plato, *Phædo*. 63. † Aristoph. *Ranæ*. 107.

‡ Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica.

§ S. 210, de *Quadr.* 6. ¶ Chr. S. 209.

¶ Serm. ad Pastores in Synodo.

\*\* *Sardagna Theologia*, Tom. IV. 308.



want of due reverence, or any extravagant inclination to infer more than would be true from the observation, methinks a disciple in the school of Christ may very naturally and judiciously appeal to the facts of evangelic history, which records of his Divine Master, that he ate fish with his disciples, but no where that he ate meat, excepting the Paschal lamb. Abstinence is ridiculed, because, as Manzoni remarks, "the world abhors all penance, and pretends to be superior to what it would avoid. It is, however, only in the man diligent in the research of worldly contents of every kind, enemy of all humiliation and of all suffering, that this external expression of penance, observed pharisaically, is an isolated operation, so different from the rest of his life, that it forms a discord, which is laid hold of by the world to cast ridicule upon the things of religion; but if considered in connection with the motives of the Church in requiring it, not only must this ridicule cease, but we must confess the beauty, the wisdom, and the importance of this law. It is a truth, as well known as it is humiliating, that the abuse of flesh influences the mind and degrades it. A series of grave, regulated, magnanimous, benevolent sentiments, can be interrupted by a dish, and in their place will be formed a kind of carnal enthusiasm, a sensual exaltation, which renders the heart indifferent to the greatest things, which destroys or weakens the sense of what is noble, and impels to sensuality and egotism."\* By dainty platters, as Shakespeare remarks, the ribs are made rich, but the wits bankrupt.

Some men pretend that the ecclesiastical obligation tended to make men forgetful of the duties of the moral law; as if compliance with the laws of the Church were felt as affording them a dispensation for obeying those of morality. But Manzoni shows the weakness of this objection. "Take away the commandments of the Church! Will you (he asks) have fewer crimes? No, but you will have fewer religious sentiments, fewer works independent of impulse, and of a temporal end; fewer works directed to the order of perfecting souls, for which man is created."† If the Church invites her children to abstain, she at the same time calls upon them to pray, that "the observance which they exhibit corporeally, they may be able to exercise with sincere minds."‡ Besides, in what page of history do we find ground for this opinion, which supposes a phenomenon in such contradiction to the universal voice of the intimate conscience of mankind? We read on the contrary of noble and impressive lessons delivered to men under the influence of violent passions, reminding them that it would be in vain to observe the ecclesiastical discipline during penitential seasons, unless the manners were made in all respects conformable to the spirit and intention of that ordinance. Albertus Grantzius relates, that the emperor Conrad, having found a rebellious and refractory brother in Henry, duke of Suabia, and being obliged to meet him in battle, Duke Henry was defeated, and obliged to fly into Pannonia to his relation,

\* Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica.

† Id. 220.

‡ Collect VI. feria after Ash Wednesday.

King Stephen. The King was displeased at such open and malignant contumacy. He resolved, therefore, to reprove his relative efficaciously but modestly : so on Good Friday he ordered his table to be served with flesh meats. Duke Henry expressed horror at such a banquet on that day, to whom King Stephen replied with a sweet and friendly tone, "I deem it a less evil to eat flesh on this day than contumaciously to rebel against a brother." This kind of admonition found a favorable hearer : Duke Henry was moved to compunction, and forthwith became reconciled with his brother. You ascribe this to the generosity of an individual ? Nay, it was an act of strict obedience to the positive doctrine of the Church. "*Bene jejunat, qui fraternas injurias pacifici pectoris lenitate dimittit.*"\*

Having now seen what was the spirit of the vigil, let us proceed to inquire respecting the solemnity which followed.

The Church begins the day, in relation to fasting, like the ancient Romans, from midnight ; but respecting indulgences and festivities, from the first vespers to the setting of the sun, on the day following.† With the Pagans, only certain particular days were said to be festal, or "*dies feriæ,—sed Christianis et maxime clericis,*" says Walafrid Strabo ; *omnes dies in ferias deputentur.*"‡ The word obligation, in the ecclesiastical sense, was not of familiar use during the ages of faith ; for where devotion always accompanied a sense of duty, it was rare to find persons desirous of communion with the faithful, and at the same time of assisting in the public assemblies in the churches as seldom as possible. In countries like the Tyrol, where those ages may be considered as still in their course, the people generally assist at mass every morning, and at benediction every evening ; and where such is the disposition of men's hearts, it cannot be expected that they should be universally acquainted with the precise minimum required by the church in regard to assistance in the public worship. Under such circumstances, the churches will be as full on festivals of devotion as on those of obligation ; for as men are generally more consistent in regard to their feelings and affections than in their capacity of logicians, there can never be many who would voluntarily absent themselves on the purification, after having been present, through a sense of obligation, at the celebration of the nativity.

However, as the circumstances of men's relations with society, and the innumerable perturbations of life, must have always operated in preventing many of the most fervent disciples from assisting daily at the divine mysteries, the term obligation was used to designate those greater festivals, at the celebration of which the Church required absolutely that every Christian should be present, unless prevented by sickness, or other unavoidable hindrance.

Sismondi, and other modern writers, have declaimed on what they call the absurdity of maintaining that by disobedience to this law, men incurred the pen-

\* Maxim. Taurin. § 43.

† Card. Bona, de Divin. Psal. xcviil.

‡ Walafrid Strabo, de Rebus Ecclesiast. cap. 20.

alty of mortal sin ; but they do not consider the banner under which this is ordained : "If," says Louis of Blois, "you disdain any one of the observances of our holy religion, however slightly important they may be, and if you transgress them voluntarily, you are not a servant of Jesus Christ."\* "And is it possible," asks Manzoni, "that the Christian who would voluntarily abstain from assisting at the sacred mysteries on a festival, could be one of the just, who live by faith ? Is not such an act the most certain proof of his utter indifference for Christianity ? and therefore, is not the justice of that sentence of the Church evident, which pronounces it to be a mortal sin ?"† The groundlessness of the displeasure evinced by the moderns, with respect to ecclesiastical obligations in general, would be evident if they would consider, that with our ancestors things were ordained and instituted for persons who had faith, and not for the indifferent. To retain men in obedience to the Church, it was not a necessary condition that she should command nothing : nor was it received as a maxim, that the faithful were to be conformable to that multitude of persons who had practically ceased to believe in the mysteries of human redemption. The middle ages would have treated with contempt the doctrine of some of our philosophers, who affirm that, "in proportion as manners become corrupt, laws should be made weaker." "The Divine legislator of Christians," as Bonald well observes, "did not accommodate his laws to the inclinations of men, but repaired their inclinations by his laws. If he had not made his laws, 'more perfect than men then could bear,' what laws would he then have given to the men and women who are described by Juvenal, Tacitus, Petronius, Suetonius, or Josephus, the last historian of the Jews ? But it was not according to this modern principle that he considered man and society. Far from proposing to man weak laws, accomplices to his passions, or powerless witnesses of his disorders, he imposed them on him as a bridle, and opposed them as a barrier ; 'perfecti estote.' 'Be ye perfect, as God himself is perfect.' "‡

The observation of the first, instead of the seventh day, or Jewish Sabbath, originated in apostolic prescription, as we infer from its having been universal in the first ages of the Church. It is true the early Fathers are found remarking with Clemens Alexandrinus, that the seventh was a sacred number, not only with the Hebrews, but also with the Greeks ; that Hesiod and Homer both speak repeatedly of the seventh sacred day, ἑβδομον ἱερὸν ἡμᾶρ. Callimachus also, in many verses, alluding to it—

*ἑβδομὴ ἐν πρωτοῖσι, καὶ ἑβδομὴ ἐστὶ τελετή,*

and the Elegies of Solon also ascribing divinity to the seventh day.§ St Augustin,|| and Martianus Capella,¶ speak of the perfection of the seventh number, which is taken for the universality in Scripture—"seven times falls the just man, seven

\* Guide Spirituelle. chap. 1.

† Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica.

‡ Du Divorce, 164.

§ Stromat. Lib. V. c. 14.

|| De Civ. Dei, XI. 31.

¶ Lib. VII.



times will I praise thee." Yet it is no less certain, that the substitution had been expressly and authoritatively made. Thus St. Justin Martyr, describing the assemblies of the Christians, says, "We have chosen the Sunday as being the first day of the creation of the world, and that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord."\* Accordingly, in ancient writers, the expression "Day of the Resurrection," is often used to signify the Sunday;† and in the Roman order, that of Pasch is applied to all Sundays in the year. Constantine made a law, ordaining that the Sunday should be celebrated throughout the Roman empire; and he extended it to the army, discharging soldiers from all military functions on that day. The Council of Laodicea renewed the order, prescribing its observance to all who had it in their power, which allowed exceptions in case of necessity. An hundred years later, the Emperor Leo, by an ordinance, forbade all judicial proceedings on that day, as also the amusements of the theatre, circus, and spectacles of wild beasts. All this was commanded to every subject on pain of incurring degradation and confiscation of property.‡ On Sundays and festivals, in order that the minds of the faithful should be occupied with the worship of God, it was expressly forbidden, both by the civil and ecclesiastical power, through all the cities of the empire, to admit the people to any theatrical exhibitions.§

This discipline continued to prevail during the middle ages. "On the Lord's day," say the decrees collected by Ives of Chartres, "nihil aliud agendum est, nisi Deo vacandum."|| All the faithful were then required to assist at high mass at the hour of tierce.¶ St. Germain, Bishop of Paris, is related to have cured the infirmity of a man named Gildomer, at Essone, which had been visited upon him for having worked upon a Sunday.\*\* In the time of St. Gregory of Tours, a servant in the diocese of Tours was thought to have been judicially punished by Divine Providence for having worked at forming a hedge on a Sunday;†† and a rustic named Leodulphus, was also regarded as visited from heaven for having yoked his oxen on a Sunday during the time of harvest.‡‡ It is also related of St. Patrick, that he prevented certain heathens, in the north of Ireland, from working at a wall on a Sunday. In Bavaria, at the end of the seventh century, when Paganism still struggled against the influence of the Church, we find Duke Theodo, on being converted by the blessed Bishop Rupert, to whom he gave permission to choose any place for his Episcopal See, giving to the Church the tenth part of the salt, and the tenths of the tax levied upon the salt that was collected in the mines on the Lord's day.§§ Petrarch mentions having beheld at Naples, with astonishment and indignation, a detestable abuse, which had long resisted both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Rich men and nobles, as well as the plebeian inhabitants of that city, used to

\* Apolog. 2.

† Mabillon in Vita S. Ruperti.

‡ Hist. des Fetes de l'Eglise,

§ Cod. Theodos. L. XV. tit. 5. Just. III. 12. 7. Concil. Carthag. 401, c. 5.

|| Decret. Pars. IV. c. 13.

¶ Id. Pars. II. de Missâ.

\*\* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom. XI. 143.

†† Miracula de B. Martini, cap. 29.

‡‡ Id. 44.

§§ Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 19.

assemble on a certain plain called the Campo Carbonario, where sanguinary gladiatorial games were held on Sundays and festivals. All persons having been prohibited from attending under pain of excommunication, and the king, Charles III. having given the ground, the spot was solemnly blessed in his presence by Bartholomew, Vicar of the Neapolitan Church, and a temple erected, to which was added a new hospital for the poor.\* "The Greeks and Romans," says a capitulary of St. Theodore of Canterbury, "do not on Sundays sail or ride, or make bread or mount in a chariot, unless to go to church. The Greeks," it adds, "do not write publicly, but for necessity they write privately at home.†" It appears from Bede, that it was not allowed to use a carriage on Sundays; for Cuthbert, on entering the presence of Queen Ermantrude, said secretly to her (for it was Saturday), "Early on the second feria, mount your chariot (quia die Dominico curru ire non licet,) and hasten to the royal city."‡ At Thoulouse, Rodès, and many other places, the gates of cities were closed on Sundays and festivals, to prevent the chariots of travellers from passing; § and the Fathers of the Council of Salzburg, in the year 1456, seem to have desired a return to this discipline,|| of which Mabillon finds traces in many synods of an earlier age.¶ Jean Molinet, recording an instance of the impiety of the people of Bruges, says that when the King of the Romans was confined in the Hostel of Ravestein, the workmen, losing all fear of God, continued to fortify the house during Sunday and the festival of St. Peter.\*\* At Marienburg, the Teutonic knights were forbidden to profane Sundays and festivals by any work, or game for money; which latter, indeed, on no occasion, was permitted in the order.†† Constantine had prescribed that markets should be held on Sunday; but against this practice Charlemagne issued a special law;‡‡ and Mathew Paris relates, that in the year 1200, the Pope sent preachers to various parts of the world, to enforce a stricter observance of the Sunday.—Amongst others, Eustace, Abbot of Flay, came into England, wrought divine miracles, and went from place to place, persuading the people to piety; and he so effectually prohibited markets on the Lord's day, that in all parts of England they were transferred to the Monday. In an ancient document in the archives of the Church of Ferrara, on the date of the seventh century, it is required that all work should be suspended on Sundays, from Saturday evening till Monday morning.§§

On the other hand, the Church was so far from authorizing or approving of the Pharisaical strictness which induced the rabbinical writers to forbid any one to save another from fire on the Sabbath, or to kill an insect, that we find her, by the canons of the Council of Orleans, in the year 538, making it a subject of complaint

\* Italia Sacra. Tom. V. 138.

† Theodori Cantuar, Archiep. Capit. apud. Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IX.

‡ In Vita S. Cuthberti, cap. 27.

§ Monteil. Hist. des Français, Tom. V. 23.

|| Germania Sacra. II.

¶ Concil. III. Aurelian. can. 28.

†† Chronic III. 230.

\*\* Voight. Geschichte Marienburgh, s. 193.

†† Capit. CXL.

§§ Italia Sacra, I. 575.

that some had persuaded the people that on Sundays it was not lawful to travel with horses or oxen in carriages, or to dress meat, or clean the house, or one's person. This council declares, that these observances are more Judaic than Christian, and confirms all the ancient prescriptions giving liberty, but it excepts the cultivation of the soil, which would prevent men from assisting in the church : and decrees, in nearly the same words, were enacted by the Council of Vienne in the year 755. It is a curious verification of a common maxim, when we find the French Parliament suppressing, as irreverent to the Divinity, a medal which had been struck by the city of Dijon, to commemorate the charity of Jacques de Frasans, its mayor, during the plague of 1639, on which was inscribed "*Etiam in Septimo non licuit quiescere.*" The Church applauded what this assembly of Gallican magistrates condemned.

In common with Sundays, all the greater festivals were holidays of obligation, or days consecrated to God, in which, as the Council of Sens says, the faithful must abstain from all servile work : "*nec vanitatibus aut voluptatibus occupentur ;*" but must apply themselves to the divine offices in the churches, and the people must be often thus admonished.\* "True men, and fearing God, were to be stationed in the streets of cities and villages, and on the public ways, to exhort the negligent to repair to the church."† All servile work and judicial proceedings were to cease on the festivals, by decrees of the Emperors, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius.‡ On the Rogation days, we read in the Roman order, "that no one then must presume to ride on horseback, but that all must walk barefooted." The whole legislation, both civil and ecclesiastical, during the ages of faith, was directed to securing rest for the people on these great days of devotion, to enable them to conform to the spirit, and accomplish the object of the Church, in these institutions. If the holy councils declare that all days between Christmas and the Epiphany are festivals,§ the constitutions of emperors ordained that, in honor of the great solemnity, from the 20th of December till the 6th of January, all pleadings were to cease before the tribunals. It even appears that, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, servile work and traffic were suspended during the whole of this interval ;|| and by the canons of the Council of Erfurt, in 932, it is forbidden to summon any one to plead in courts of justice seven days before Christmas, fifteen days before the Paschal time, and seven days before St. John ; in order that every one may have means of going to the church, and of praying there. The same prohibition is extended to all who would constrain any Christian going to or returning from church, and require him to plead in the courts. If judicial acts were exercised upon a festival of obligation, they were void by the canon law.¶

In very laborious trades, the ancient law of France required the workmen to rest during twelve days after Christmas, twelve days after Easter, and twelve days

\* Concil. Senonens. act. iv. cap. 1. 1460.

† Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars VI. 310.

‡ In L. Omnes L. VII. de Feriis, Lib. III c. tit. 12.

§ Concil. Turen. XII. c. 16.

|| Hist. des Fetes de l'Eglise.

¶ Joan. Devoti Institut. Canonic. II. V. I.



after Whitsuntide.\* The time for opening the parliament of Paris used to be after St. Martin and after Easter; and Duchesne gives this reason, that the first kings of France used to devote the spring of the year to fasting, hearing sermons, visiting prisoners, and other works proper for Lent: thus providing for the health of their souls: whereas the autumn was the season fit for hunting, and other exercises which ministered to the health of the body.† The old Parliaments of Normandy used to break up on the Friday before Palm Sunday, and not meet again till the Monday after Quasimodo. In like manner, from the Friday before Pentecost till the Monday after Trinity, and from two days before Christmas till the day after the Epiphany, there was a cessation of all business.‡

It was especially enjoined by councils, that men and women servants, as well as all who are engaged in any labor, should have remissions of their tasks, in order that the whole people might have equal opportunity of serving God.§ That the faith and devotion of the laity corresponded with the ecclesiastical and civil legislation in this respect, we have still, in England, an interesting proof in the custom of giving Christmas gifts; which presents to dependents were formerly repeated at all the great festivals, for they originated in the charity of masters, who desired that their servants and laborers might indulge their devotions, and fulfil their obligations, by devoting these seasons to the care of their souls, frequenting the sacraments, and assisting at the offices in the church, and at the same time involve their families in no injury by causing an interruption to their wages.

In the year 1245, was buried in Seelbieres, a monastery of Cisteaux, a pious seignior, de Romilly, who dwelt at Romilly-sur-Seine, of whom it is related in the charters of that abbey, that, during a time of great famine, assisting on Easter day at the divine office of this great solemnity, and seeing that the greatest part of the inhabitants were neither present at mass nor vespers, he inquired the reason of such conduct; when he was told that, urged by the extreme necessity of the famine, they had been constrained to go into the neighboring places to beg alms. He was greatly affected at this, on two accounts: first, that this day should be profaned; and secondly, that the poor should suffer such distress. Therefore, that they might never again be obliged to leave the church on Easter day to beg bread, he gave the tenths of Romilly, which were in his possessions, to the Abbey of Seelbieres, on condition that every Easter Sunday the monks should distribute bread to each of the inhabitants of Romilly, so that no one should receive less than four or five pounds of the best white bread, but the poorest were to have seven or eight pounds; which distribution continued to be made till the general overthrow of the institutions in France. In like manner, in the Church of St. Magdalen, at Troyes, every Sunday in the year, the poor, who were called by rote one after the other, used to receive a similar allowance after high mass, in pursuance of the foundation of Nicolas Faï and Isabella, his wife, in 1534.||

\* Monteil, *Hist. des Français*. III. —

† *Antiquitez des Villes de France*, I. 227.

‡ *Coutumes du Pays et Duché de Normandie*.

§ *Concil. Aurelian*, I. c. 27.

|| *Desguerros, Hist. du Diocese de Troyes*, 354.

With regard to the ecclesiastical observance, let us pause here to remark the wisdom and admirable fitness of the institution of octaves, or the setting apart eight days during which the mystery of the festival continued to be commemorated. "We shall rejoice during seven days," says Hugo de St. Victor, "and on the eighth we shall terminate the solemnity."\*

Mary Magdalen remained at the sepulchre even after the disciples had departed: still she stood there weeping. Then we read she stooped, and looked into the sepulchre. "Certainly," says St. Gregory, "she had before seen that it was empty; she had before announced that the body of the Lord had been taken away. What is this, then, that she should again stoop down and look in? 'Sed amanti semel aspexisse non sufficit.†'"

So was it with the faithful people on the yearly commemorations of the Church during the middle ages. For them it was not enough to have looked but once: they remained at the sepulchre. Again, our Lord, after his passion continued with his disciples during forty days, speaking concerning the kingdom of God. Accordingly, it was most natural that, in subsequent ages, when his resurrection was commemorated, men should desire to delay for some time in the contemplation of such a solemnity: they continued, therefore, in assembly, apart from the world, consoling and confirming each other in the supernatural life of faith, joining in melodious songs, bidding the Queen of Heaven rejoice, and inviting the sons and daughters of men to contemplate every minute circumstance which attended the triumph of the celestial King, the King of Glory. During these six most holy days which followed the Paschal solemnities, let no man, says one council, dare to perform any servile work, but let all together united, indulging in hymns, demonstrate the ardor of their perseverance in daily sacrifices.‡ Let the whole week, from the day of the resurrection till the next Sunday, says another council, be spent in the churches in psalms and hymns, spiritual songs, offered up in gratitude to Christ, and in attention to the holy Scriptures and to the celebration of the divine mysteries; and let no one, during those days, seek any other spectacle.§ "We prescribe," say the Fathers of the council of Mayence, in the year 813, "that, during the Paschal week all works should cease, although, after the fifth feria, it shall be lawful to plow or sow, or dress vines."|| During the entire octave, the Paschal offices were celebrated with the same splendor as on the day of the resurrection. "Paschalis dies," says Amalarius, bishop of Metz, who flourished in the beginning of the ninth century, *qui per septem dies quasi unus dies celebratur.*¶

In places of decline and desolation, when a mutilation of these solemnities had become indispensable, there are affecting proofs of the regret with which they were abandoned. Rising out of the ruins of Paestum and of Capaccio, which latter city had been built from the ruins of the former, and destroyed by Frederic

\* Instit. Monast. Serm. XXXI.

† Hom. XXV. in. Evang.

‡ Concil. Matic. II. c. 2.

§ Concil. Trullan. c 66.

|| C. 36.

¶ Lib. de Ord. Antiphonarii.

II. in the year 1244, when the Count of Capaccio sided with Innocent IV., stands an ancient and noble Basilica, whose walls are formed with the antique marbles of Paestum. The sacred vessels and vestments of this church are preserved in the Church of St. Peter of Capaccio, the bishop and canons having been dispensed from residence on the destruction of the city, the see being virtually transferred to Diana, and the canons dispersed through various towns of the diocese, by command of Sixtus V., who assigns for reason that the city and all the buildings both public and private, had fallen to decay; that the atmosphere was pernicious; that the roads leading to it were infested by robbers and other wicked men, who concealed themselves in the neighboring woods in order to attack strangers; and that the whole place had become depopulated and uninhabitable. There remained in the cathedral only one priest and a sacristan. Nevertheless the bishop and canons were bound to repair thither on Easter Monday, in order to celebrate with solemnity there, as also in the ancient cathedral of Paestum, mass and vespers.\* In the last century, also, we find Francis Xavier Fontana, bishop of Campagne, instituting in his cathedral a solemn celebration of the divine mysteries and offices on the same second festival of the resurrection.

This protraction of festivals seems to the moderns to have been only a reckless waste of time, and an unreasonable suspension of the ordinary course of domestic and social occupations; but to the men of the middle ages, who cultivated logical heads and affectionate hearts, a festival of twelve hours to commemorate any of the great mysteries of the Christian faith would have been deemed either too much or too little. Preserving with admirable tact consistency in every thing relative to the intellectual order, they would not have asked permission to commemorate the foundation of their faith, unless they could have celebrated it in a manner suitable to the affections and necessities of human nature. Philosophers, who set no value upon Christian traditions and the primitive ceremonies of faith, may disapprove of all commemorative festivals; but, if they feel the advantage or necessity of retaining those of the Catholic Church, they cannot with justice censure those who would have retained the spirit as well as the form of these institutions. It cannot be injudicious, or even useless, to ponder upon a theme so noble, so inspiring, as the proofs of the mysteries of our faith. That cannot be an abuse which serves as a permission or an invitation to devote a considerable interval of time to such an exercise. Certainly it is not superstition to love such indulgence, or to linger with a Virgilian earnestness around the scenes and symbols which exalt the soul with the hopes of an immortal existence:—

“*Nec vidisse semel satis est; juvat usque morari.*”

In fact, as the Church unquestionably intended these anniversaries to excite emotions corresponding, if not equal, to those which would have been caused by

\* *Italia Sacra*, VII. 465.



witnessing the real event, there was no other course to adopt, but to order the protraction of the solemnity during a certain number of successive days ; for the men whom the Church had to conduct in the middle ages, whether you consider them of an heroic or of a selfish type, were at all events, in an intense degree, idealists : they valued a conviction infinitely more than any other possession that the glory or industry of the world could procure them ; consequently, they were not to be invited one day to commemorate the resurrection of their Lord—the pledge of their own resurrection, and to be told on the next that they might resume their usual occupations, as if no such appeal had been made either to their generous fidelity or to their interested egotism.

The moderns, who regard Christianity as a mere opinion of philosophy, may argue against the observance of any commemoration or external development of faith ; but they cannot with justice condemn the pastors of the Church, who knew it to consist in a series of facts, for having been consistent in permitting their own principles to produce their natural results ; nor can any Christians call upon them for a mutilation or curtailment of these great anniversaries, without betraying something worse than a profound ignorance of human nature, as well as a very erroneous conception of the original idea which presided over the arrangement of the ecclesiastical year.

These observations, however, could only apply to the greater festivals ; for with respect to others, there was no octave attached to the festival of any martyr but St. Lawrence, nor to that of any confessor excepting to that of St. Martin.\*

It was not merely assistance of the divine mysteries that sufficed upon the great festivals. It was necessary to repair to the public assemblies of the faithful in churches. In the time of St. Augustin, priests were prohibited from admitting any one to private masses on festivals ; and this prohibition was repeated in the year 781 by Theodulphus, bishop of Orleans. By a council held in the same city in 511, it was ordered that no one should celebrate Easter in the country ; and the Council of Paris, in 824, enjoins upon kings and nobles that they should not, on days of festival, assist at the office in the chapels of palaces. Indeed it was always forbidden to celebrate mass in domestic chapels on any of the great festivals, unless in time of war, when it would be dangerous to leave the walls.† They who were present at the sacred mysteries on festivals, were always fasting from food and drink. An ancient author, in the time of St. Walaric, says, "There were two brethren, who came to him on the festival of the blessed Martin, to whom he said in reproach, 'I wonder that you should have presumed to drink before the solemnity of mass.' They, confessing their fault, demanded pardon, and promised to amend for the future : " and a council even forbids priests and deacons, and sub-deacons, after food and drink, "in ecclesia dum missæ dicuntur stare."‡

\* Durand. Rationale, Lib. VII. 37.

† Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, XIII. 169.

‡ Concil. Antissiod. can. 19. § 5.

Here I would invite the reader to consider for a moment how a thousand popular customs connected with the festivals of religion conduced to give a tone of sanctity and to impart a kind of poetic charm to domestic life. The doctrines of faith, during the middle ages, are all presented under the light of facts, than which no human events were more real. Thus, during the time of All Souls, it was the custom, as in Italy at present, for every one to appear in mourning. When that ghostly era arrives, a devout multitude leaves every city, and repairs to the holy field of the dead, bearing lighted torches, to assist at the benediction there given solemnly. The poor, the lame, and the blind, meekly and in silence, line the ways, and alms are largely given to them. After the office, each family visits its ancestral tomb, and prays for the souls of its members departed. Ah me! what tears then stream forth at the awakened memory of the pious son, the affectionate sister, the faithful brother, the reverend parent, and of the angelic spouse! All that night the bells of the churches and monasteries send forth a solemn peal. In some places, as at Bayeux, in consequence of the affluence of the people, there was the fair of the dead.\* During the whole of Lent, spectacles of amusement ceased, and all splendid attire was laid aside, to be resumed only at the Paschal festival.

Signs of joyful affection were mutually given on great anniversaries. On Easter day, the holy father at Rome, before celebrating mass, kisses the cardinals, prelates, and others of his household, saying, as he salutes them, "Surrexit Dominus vere;" to which they reply, "Et apparuit Simoni," and this custom became general among the faithful.† Pope Pius V. indeed found it necessary to signify among abuses a custom of jocularity at Easter in the very church, which gave rise to the expression, "Risus, or fabula Paschalis."

The term Pasch indeed came to signify every joyful feast; so that, even in the Roman order, we read of the Pasch of the Epiphany, the Pasch of Pentecost.

At Paris it was the custom for the silversmiths to provide the most costly service of plate for the banquet given to the sick poor in the Hostel Dieu on Easter day.‡ In holy week, princes ordained that prisons should be opened, and pardon granted to criminals, and insolvent debtors discharged. St. Chrysostom says, that the Emperor Theodosius sent letters of remission to the cities for the days preceding Easter,§ a custom which was observed by his successors, who, as St. Leo the Great says, made the altitude of their power stoop in honor of the passion and resurrection of Christ, and tempered the severity of their laws during the days on which the world was redeemed, in order to imitate the divine mercy.|| In France, in the seventh century, this custom was also in force. Subsequently, the same indulgence was granted on the days preceding Christmas and Whitsuntide. "Le Roy de l'Aumône" was a popular festivity instituted in the ninth century, in commemoration of the liberalities of Boson, king of Burgundy. Every year, after

\* Pluquet *Essais Hist. sur Bayeux*, ch. 28.

† Durandus *Rationale*, Lib. VI. c. 86.

‡ Du Chesne, *Antiquitéz des Villes de France*, I. 82.

§ Homil. in Magn. Hebdom.

|| Ser. 39.

high mass on Easter Monday, the magistrates used to declare the name of the citizen that best deserved to be proclaimed "King of Alms." The king elect (and what earthly king ought not to have envied him?) was then crowned, and conducted to the prison, where he had the privilege of delivering two prisoners. Then he made a solemn distribution of the royal alms; after which, a public dinner closed the festivities.

Who can describe the grandeur of that triumphant march on Palm Sunday, when the aisles of churches, and even the streets of cities, seem a moving wood?

In Spain it is a custom in schools for the scholars to gather the palms, and form them into a variety of beautiful shapes, representing churches and castles, on each of which is a cross and an image of our Saviour. The boy who has gained the prize at examination, is then appointed to precede the rest, and the students in a body form a part of the public solemn procession. On the same day, the clergy of Nôtre Dame, in Paris, used to make a station before the prison of the Petit Chatelet, while the ecclesiastic who was first in dignity entered the prison and delivered a prisoner, who then followed them into the choir of the metropolitan church.\*

We find Honorius II. granting, in the year 1217, to Fulco, bishop of Paris, and to his successors, the right of proceeding in the procession on Palm Sunday and on Easter Monday, mounted on a white horse.†

At Florence, the family of the Pazzi had the privilege of appointing one of its members to kindle the new fire on Holy Saturday in the church, in commemoration of the heroic piety of a knight of that family who followed Godfrey of Bouillon to Jerusalem, from which he brought back sacred fire.‡

The answer recorded of the blessed Benedict may have been the origin of using the word "Pasch," to signify any happy event,§ as in France the word "noël," or "requies dei," which denoted Christmas, was become, as every one knows, the common cry of popular rejoicing. At Rheims, the children of the choir used to be dressed to represent angels appearing to the shepherds. Birds were let to fly loose in the church, to represent the liberty which men were to enjoy when delivered from the slavery of the demon by the birth of our Saviour.||

The nativity of our Lord was associated with a multitude of incidents which rendered it peculiarly dear to the imagination of the people:—

"And well our Christian sires of old,  
Loved, when the year its course had roll'd,  
And brought blithe Christmas back again,  
With all his hospitable train:  
Domestic and religious rite  
Gave honor to the holy night,

\* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom. I. IV. †Italia Sacra, I. 1098.

‡ Id.. III. 87.

§ Mabilonii, vet. Analet. 407.

|| Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, Lib. IV. 105.



On Christmas nights the bells were rung;  
 On Christmas night the mass was sung;  
 That only night in all the year  
 Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.  
 Then open'd wide the baron's hall  
 To vassal, tenant, serf and all:  
 All hail'd with uncontroll'd delight,  
 And general voice, the happy night,  
 That to the cottage or the crown  
 Brought tidings of salvation down."

Stephen Pasquier mentions that it was the custom in his youth, every evening all through Advent, to sing carols in honor of our Saviour.\* During that season, in England, the waits, while all other men took their rest, wandered singing hymns in the streets; and on the blessed night, every one kept watch like the shepherds, while minstrels chanted Christmas carols, the simplicity and tenderness of which were sometimes admirable, as in the verse,—

"He neither shall be born  
 In housen nor in hall,  
 Nor in the place of Paradise,  
 But in an ox's stall;  
 He neither shall be rock'd  
 In silver nor in gold,  
 But in a wooden cradle,  
 That rocks on the mould."

In these ancient carols the people of each town or village used to be represented making the offering of whatever best object they possessed for the infant Saviour and the blessed Mary. Thus, in the "Noël," published by Lebeuf, beginning with "Les Bourgeoises de Chartres," the author represents the inhabitants of Chartres, Montlhéry, and other villages, coming to the stable of Bethlehem and making their offerings:—

"Vous eussiez vu venir tous ceux de saint Yon,  
 Et ceux de Bretigny apportant du poisson:  
 Les barbeaux et gardons, anguilles et carpettes,  
 Etoient à bon marché, et aussi les perchettes."†

The history of the Magi and of the Shepherds had charmed the winter evenings of every family. The Pilgrim and the Red Cross Knight had given their moving commentary, and described what traces they had beheld in Palestine of that pious journey. Then, when these romantic recitals had enchanted many a young head, the night would bring with it blessed dreams of bright angels balancing above the cradle, with their blue wings and golden hair, and robe white as the snow. The long desired hour at last arrived, and the church opened her indulgences for those who assisted at the mass of midnight. What an impressive thing then to

\* Recherche de la France, Lib. III. 16.

† Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom. XI. 289.

behold cities awakened and rising up, like one man, to hasten thither ! What an impressive thing to behold, assembled in the church, the wild throng of those eternal wanderers, half astronomers, half sorcerers, (for the terror they inspired was not confined to Briè)\* the shepherds of the plains of Languedoc, of the Cevennes, of the Pyrenees, those who in Estramadura, Navarre, and Arragon, with no other companions but the stars in their solitude, perpetuate the Asiatic life, the life of Lot and Abraham, those whom we find in Italy also, clad in the skins of beasts, carrying nothing with them but their rustic instruments of music, on the Apennines, the plains of Apulia, and over the Campagna of Rome, walking in all the liberty of the antique world ! These now were objects of edification in the churches, and of wonder as they strayed along the streets of Rome, Madrid, Toulouse, and Barcelona. Every where, over the obscure plains, along the ocean shores, amidst forests and mountains, glared the torch of the nocturnal pilgrim, who made his way murmuring the names of Jesus and Mary. On that blessed night, all the churches in Christendom, from the Basilica of St. Mary Major, to the Chapel of the Poor Hermit in the Wilderness, united their voices to repeat the joyful “Alleluja, Christus natus est nobis,” and the song that so moves the soul—“Venite adoremus.” A thousand local and incidental charms were often added, according to the tender piety of the people. St. Francis, on one occasion, being near the town of Grecio celebrated the festival of the Nativity within an ancient portico, in a stable, in which were an ox and an ass, and figures representing our Lord and his blessed mother and Joseph. The friars were more numerous than the inhabitants of the place ; but the peasants of the neighborhood came thither with pipes and rustic instruments, on which they played before the stable, so that all night long the surrounding mountains resounded with their harmony. It was on this night that St. Francis, after the gospel, preaching to the people, was unable through tenderness to pronounce the adorable name, and spoke of the Infant of Bethlehem. An effect of this night was the conversion of John de Grecio, who renounced chivalry and the pomps of the world, to take up his cross with Francis.† It is worthy of remark that even the infidels in Pagan lands, and the wild race of outcasts who wander over Europe, are moved by a certain vague traditionary or instinctive reverence for that night. It is said that multitudes of the tribe entitled Bohemians, or gipsies, assemble every year, on Christmas eve, on Salisbury Plain. St. Augustin had remarked this phenomenon, and had observed that “the celebrity of the Paschal vigil throughout the whole world compelled those to watch in flesh, who in heart, I do not say,” he cries, “sleep, but are buried in Tartarean impiety. Therefore,” he continues, “we are admonished even by our enemies unintentionally, how we should watch for ourselves, when, on account of us, they who envy us watch. For of those who have never been consigned under the name of Christ,

\* Le P. le Brun, *Hist. de Superstition*, Tom. I. 308.

† *Les Chroniques des Freres Mineurs*, Lib. I. c. 95.

there are many who, on that night, cannot sleep—some through grief, others through shame; others again who begin to approach towards faith, and who are prevented from sleeping by the fear of God.”\* But while this continues true, intolerance or cowardice, in modern times, have availed themselves of the scoffs of heresy to deprive a Christian people of a happiness which the Turks do not refuse to the Catholics of Constantinople.

The moderns seem to regard Christmas night as the most perilous of all those in the year, and the most distempered. In the middle ages it was thought that the nights were at that season wholesome, and that nothing had power to harm, so holy and so blessed was the time. Then were associated in the imagination of youth the sacred solemnities of the Church, her bright altars, and her saintly crowd of faithful adorers, with rides through forests resounding to the roar of famished wolves, and the crossing of midnight torrents. It was the contrast of communion and desolation—of heaven and earth. Thus we read in the *Spiritual Voyage* of Dom John de Palafox, bishop of Osma, which is the fruit of a curate’s meditation on the night of Christmas, previous to singing matins:—“Then we walked over mountains covered with snow, and through fearful rocks; and the darkness of the night often prevented me from seeing my guide. And I said, ‘Alas! my good angel, what roads are these? The night which was so delightful to me in the stable where our Lord reposed, is now become very terrible,’”—a symbolic expression of a general truth; for when one turns from the church and the altar to the naked world over which the blight of incredulity has passed, one feels like Adam when about to leave Paradise,—

————— “ All places else  
Inhospitable appear, and desolate,  
Not knowing us, nor known.”

Well, indeed, might the church appear a delightful place on that blessed night when the altar, illuminated with a sudden splendor, proclaimed in symbol the happy day which had risen upon the world. Nothing was even wanting that could add majesty to the solemn scene in the estimation of men of secular minds. Emperors and kings claimed as their privilege the honor of reading the Seventh Lesson, which records the decree of Cæsar Augustus.

Nor did poetry and art, and the domestic music, derive less advantage from the other festivals of the year. That of Corpus Christi was an occasion of adorning the exterior walls of houses with beautiful paintings and imagery. The streets of populous cities were made fragrant with odoriferous shrubs, while the eye was refreshed with leaves and garlands, and mingled rain of herbs and flowers; and every domestic heirloom of rare and costly device was brought forth to hail the passage of the King of Heaven. The margins of rivers, the sloping lawns, and

\* § 219, in Vigil. Pasch.



the plains of waving corn that undulated like a mighty sea under the western breeze, now wondered at the unaccustomed brightness of the cross and banners, and at the melodious chants of men who, instead of wandering over the earth like a race cursed of heaven to pursue its innocent creatures, now, like angels mild, walked in peace with nature.

Thus every where in this nether world, as formerly in Paradise, the descendants of Adam could frequent with worship, place by place, where God vouchsafed presence divine and among their earthly dwellings seek his bright appearances.

With respect to the popular festivals associated with those of the Church, and perpetuated by the general attachment of the people, if on the page of history they should seem absurd and indecorous, men should consider how many things they are themselves in habit of witnessing without surprise or offence, which if coldly described in future ages, will most certainly appear in a supreme degree ridiculous.

In the middle ages, as Michelet beautifully observes, the Church and people were the same thing as mother and child. Both were void of distrust: the mother wished to suffice to her child. She accepted him without reserve. The Church did not grow angry at the popular dramas attached to some of her high festivals. She allowed even the beast as well as the man to be re-established. The humble witness of our Saviour's birth, the faithful animal whose breath warmed him an infant in the manger, who bore him with his mother into Egypt, who led him triumphant into Jerusalem, had also part in the joy. Why should one blush for him? The Saviour was not ashamed of him. In later days, indeed, the Church was obliged to impose silence on the people; but in the first centuries of the middle ages, what harm was there in all that? Who does not love that trait in the character of the blessed Francis, when he so ingeniously seeks some reason in the history of the sacred event commemorated, for imparting to all the creatures a share in the joy of the Christian festival? "*Omnis creaturæ aliquid habet homo*," was the remark of Gregory the Great; and, independent of that consideration, to judge by the love and tenderness, and even the kind of respect, evinced for all animals during the middle ages, one might suppose that men had concluded, from the words of the apostle, that the benefits of the Christian mysteries were not confined to the creatures who participated in the intelligence of angels.

The puerile solemnities on the festival of St. Nicholas, of the boy bishop, though prohibited so early as in the year 1274, by the synod and bishop of Salzbουργ,\* were, after all, an innocent, and even perhaps frequently an edifying usage. On the eve of the Holy Innocents, the child bishop and his youthful clergy, in little copes, and with burning tapers in their hands, went in procession, chanting versicles, made some prayers before the altar, and sung complin. By the statute of Sarum, no one was to interrupt or press upon the children during their procession or service in the cathedral, upon pain of anathema. This ceremony existed, not

\* Germ. *Sacra*, II. 378.

only in collegiate churches, but in almost every parish. It is supposed that the anniversary montem at Eton, which used to be celebrated in winter, is only a corruption of this ceremony, which for once at least, deserves a dignity in history, from having been suppressed by the edict of Henry VIII.

At the procession of Michaelmas, in honor of St. Michael, made by a confraternity at Paris, there used to be a representation of angels and demons, and Monteil remarks that a salutary effect was produced upon the surrounding multitude, by the spectacle of the great balance, which St. Michael slowly agitated with a solemn noise. The festival of St. Martin was an occasion of rejoicing to the poorest and most obscure class of society; for on that day was chosen Le Roy des Guétifs, or king of the mendicants, who was allowed a revenue from the authorities of each town, raised on the markets, in order to hold his court and public diversion which was repeated on the first day of the year.\*

On the eve of every festival, the inhabitants of each parish would vie with each other in bringing the most beautiful flowers and the richest vases to adorn the altar of their church; so that even in the beauteous garniture of the sanctuary one beheld an emblem of unity and faith. Fires flamed on all the hills on the eve of St. John, to commemorate, as Durandus says, "the precursor, who was a burning and a shining light."† For still was fulfilling the prediction of the angel, "Et multi in nativitate ejus gaudebunt."‡ Cities had recourse to the same emblem on this occasion. The fire in the Place de Grève, at Paris, used to be lighted solemnly by the governor of Paris; and sometimes even the king, accompanied by the princes and all the principal magistrates of the city, would take torches, and light it with their own hands.§ To the poet, however, the solemn woods and the bald top of desolate mountains would seem a more appropriate scene for this wild but touching manifestation of a general feeling, which recalls the simple enjoyments of the primæval world:—

"Interea, quod sylva glabra est, quod cespice vertex  
Decalvato horret; damna, sed apta, puto.  
Nocturnos nam hic ipse locus magè quadrat ad ignes.  
Nempe, suis semper sunt bona juncta malis!  
Huc, cantus studiosa cohors, pueri atque puellæ  
Scandite! pacificos et glomerate choros:  
At prius, ædificate pyram. Trahe pinea tecum,  
Tu Virgo! trabe tu robora querna puer!  
Arida mox, spatii interlucentibus, igni  
Nutrimenta date. Stridat in alta rogos."¶

At Florence on St. John's eve, the exterior of the vast cathedral, and of the baptistery adjoining, are illuminated at the expense of a confraternity of pious lay-

\* Marchangy, Tristan, V. 40.

† Rationale, Lib. VII. c. 19.

‡ Luc. I. 14.

§ Duchesne, Antiquitéz des Villes de France, Tom I. 62.

¶ Joan. Biselii, Deliciæ Æstatis, Lib. I. Eleg. 24. Ignēs. Joannæi.

men ; and the poor mariners on the Adriatic behold the illuminated dome of Loretto glittering on the mountains during the night of our blessed Lady's festival.

Lo, what a contrast between the two societies, however minute may be the detail in which we investigate them ! The moderns illuminate their cities for victories in the senate or the field ; Catholics, on the festivals of the martyrs. The one for an earthly and sanguinary, the other for a heavenly joy ; the one for some party triumph, the other for a universal benefit : for in the strict sense of the term, Catholic is even the very rejoicing of a Catholic population. Nevertheless it is too true that some of these ancient popular customs associated with the religious festivals were far from being in unison with the spirit and object of the Church in their institution. The Church prepares her children for the penitential exercises of Lent by gradual abstinence, in which she was followed by multitudes during the middle ages.\* Nevertheless we find St. Chrysostom speaking of persons who provide against the approach of Lent with feasting, as a city makes provision in the advance of an enemy. The Church, in subsequent ages, had to deplore the excesses of the Carnival and to recur to her most affecting solemnities, in order to win the frail and wavering combatants of the cross from succumbing to the infectious spectacle of vanity which the world then presented to them with more than ordinary attractions.

It appears that the Christians used to feast in their houses on the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the time of St. Ambrose ;† and that it was a general practice on the festivals, may be learned from St. Jerome.‡ St. Bernard alludes to this custom without censure. “You know, brethren, that it is the custom of seculars to prepare a feast on days of festival ; and the greater the solemnity, the more splendidly do they feast.”§ He might have even appealed to the monastic discipline ; for on Christmas-day, and the three feasts of Easter, the use of fowl was permitted to the Benedictine monks of Monte Casino,|| as Paul the Deacon observes in his Epistle to King Charles, son of Pepin, which is inserted in the chronicles of that house : and it is expressly mentioned that the two silver gilt cups, which had been given to the monks of that house by Robert Guiscard, were used by them in the refectory on the principal festivals.¶ But by degrees, the door of abuse being once open, grievous scandal was introduced from the anticipation of the festival, in such a manner as to interfere with the vigil, and also from the intemperance of the dissolute. The vigil of Christmas was most solemn, and the Church regarded its violation as a most serious offence ; and equally repugnant to all her desires, was the dedication of the night of Christmas to excess and intemperance.—We remarked in a former book, that by the rules of fraternities of workmen, playing cards on the vigil of Christmas subjected offenders to be banished from the society.—During the middle ages, men were not left in doubt whether they might not confine

\* Maximus Tournensis Hom. in die Cinerum.

† S. Ambrosi, Serm. LXVII.

‡ Epist. XXXIII.

§ S. Bernardi in Festo Omnium. Sanctorum. Serm. I.

|| Capit. Aquisgrav. LXIX.

¶ Chronic. Casinensis, Lib. III. c 58.



their Christmas visits to the stalls of those that ply the slaughterer's trade, according to the practice of that flesh-devouring people, who, like the idolatrous race near Mount Libanus, might wear the image of an ox to represent their Deity, from its being, as they say, with beef that he sustains them.

Dom Gervaise, abbot of La Trappe, in his life of Suger, is greatly amazed that so wise an abbot should have ordained a feast, and a full banquet for the monks, upon the day of his own future anniversary. Abeilard too had raised his voice against this mode of paying honor to days of particular devotion. St. Gregory Nazianzen, in speaking of the Epiphany, had exhorted the people to celebrate that great day, not with feasts for the body, but with a holy joy.\* St. Jerome also says, that such a mode of honoring the festivals of the martyrs was ridiculous;† and St. Augustin inveighed against the same abuse, reminding the people that they ought rather to imitate the moderation and abstinence of the martyrs.‡

"Alas ! wretched and insane lovers of the world !" exclaims Thomas à Kempis, "who pervert the festivals of Christ, and the honors of the saints, to banquets of gluttony and merriment ! Woe to you who desert Jesus, offend the angels, and gladden demons."§

Walafried Strabo mentions the custom of consecrating a lamb at Easter, which had come down from the Jews, and which still prevails in Poland ; and he objects to it as a superstition, thinking that the shadow ought to be abolished, and not blessed, when we have been vouchsafed the reality :|| and at the time of the festival of the circumcision, it was usual with the Romans to make presents, and to indulge in various entertainments. The Christians held these in horror. "The Pagans," says St. Augustin, "give presents ; you give alms to the poor. They listen to licentious songs ; you go to hear the holy homilies of your pastors. They run to the theatre ; you hasten to the church. They get drunk ; do you fast or make a frugal meal." The faithful were forbidden to give etrennes, or new-year's gifts, in order to avoid the superstition of the Pagans. It was even made a day of fasting and penance, to contrast with the excesses of the calends of January ; but as the Church was not able wholly to suppress the ancient habit, after abolishing the more gross abuses of the calends, she abrogated in the eighth century, the fasts which had been prescribed for the beginning of the year, and only exhorted the faithful to make their presents to the poor instead of their private friends. The drawing lots on the Epiphany to elect a king, is a remnant of the Pagan superstition observed in the world, which ecclesiastical writers have censured, without being able to suppress it. St. Ambrose reproves the people for continuing to observe with Gentiles the calends of January at the Epiphany. "One thing," says the holy bishop," is the order of eternal life ; another the desperation of temporal lasciviousness. How can you religiously observe the Epiphany of our Lord when

\* Lib. III.

† Epist. XIX.

‡ De Pœn. Medic.

§ Sermonum III. Pars 10.

|| De Reb. Ecclesiast. cap. 28.

you devoutly celebrate the calends? for Janus was a man, the founder of a city, now called Janiculum, in whose honor the calends of January were instituted by the Gentiles: therefore he sins who pays divine honor to a dead man. Brethren, let us shun every festivity of the Gentiles, that when they feast we may fast; and in like manner, let us avoid all conversation with the Jews, which is a great pollution.”\*

Let us move onwards—lamenting only, and with upraised hands—wondering, in conclusion, at the sensibility and oblivion of so many persons in later times, who at such seasons, withdraw themselves from cities and solemn churches, to enjoy rustic sports and luxurious banquets at their feudal retreats, and study only where they well may dine: who thus, not only as Christians, in a spiritual and mystic sense, but as men, in relation to the highest privilege of genius, may be said, when heaven opens, to gloat with fond eyes still upon the earth; and literally, like the degenerate Esau, for a mess of pottage to exchange their birthright.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.



SO far we have considered, as it were externally, the festivals of the Catholic Church. Let us now penetrate more into their interior sense, and proceed to inquire with what mind the faithful assisted at their celebration, during the ages of which we are attempting the moral history.

In the first place, they were evidently received, not as secular, but as religious festivals: they were seasons set apart for the cultivation of holy affections, of the pure, spiritual, interior life, and for the consequent exaltation of the true dignity of our nature. In the language and manners of our ancestors, we can see what it was to comply with the desire of the Church, to breathe after the nativity of Christ, to feed and drink of that celestial mystery.† It was not enough to suspend manual labor; but the affections, acts, and conversation, were all to correspond with the character of fervent, that is, sincere disciples. To spend festivals in games and diversions, was prohibited by the first Council of Toledo, and by that of Tarragona, as also by the constitution of St. Louis; which prohibitions were repeated in France under Henry II. in 1547. Moreover, men were advised to seek solitude on the festivals; for the secular conversation of persons following the discipline of the world, would render it almost impossible

\* Serm. XVII.

† Post Com. for the Vigil of Christmas.

for the soul to retain the graces and recollections which had been inspired by the ceremonies of faith. It was far from his own, far from his mother, far from the three great apostles, his most intimate friends, that Jesus persevered during those three long hours, in that lengthened prayer, "*Eundem sermonem dicens.*"

Petrarch makes a remark of this nature, in reply to a letter of Barbatius de Sal-mone, who lamented that he had not found him at Rome, when he went there to join the jubilee—"You speak of our not meeting at Rome," writes Petrarch, "as a misfortune; I hold it to have been providential. If we had met in that great city, we should have been more occupied with the arts and sciences than with our souls; and should have sought to ornament our understandings rather than to purify our hearts. The sciences are most agreeable food for the mind; but what a void do they leave in the heart, if they are not directed to their true and perfect end!"

It was the opinion of St. Francis de Sales, who was so remarkable for a constant cheerfulness, that on Sundays and festivals one ought not even to speak of temporal affairs.\* On those days Tertullian requires men to avoid all habit and office of anxiety.† On occasion of a dispute between two monks at Cluny, St. Odo, the second abbot, is recorded to have spoken as follows. "*Dominicus est, ideo nullus contristari debet, et ideo ista discussio suspendatur in crastinum.*"‡

It was expected that the laity should meditate on the mystery of the season. "It is not sufficient that you hear divine lessons in the church," says St. Cæsarius of Arles, "but you must yourselves read them, or hear them read, in your houses."§ Thus Stephen Pasquier, in a letter to the curate of his parish, says, "As Christmas approaches, I have been reading over the four Evangelists, with diligence and devotion."|| St. Bernard requires the people to have erudition in their acquaintance with the festivals. "Perhaps," saith he, "the meaning of this word Advent, so celebrated throughout the world, may not be known to many; for the unhappy sons of Adam, omitting true and salutary studies, pursue rather those that are perishable and transitory."¶

From St. Bonaventura's remarks on the ascension, we may form a correct idea of the influence which was produced on the minds of men by the festivals of the Church. "O what was it to behold the Lord thus gloriously ascending! O what would it be if any one could see and hear those most blessed spirits and holy souls ascending up with him! Perchance through joy the soul would be separated from the body, and would ascend also along with them! Never, from the beginning of the world, was there such a festival in the heavenly Jerusalem, nor will there ever be again one so solemn until the day of judgment, when all the elect will be presented there with their glorious bodies. Therefore does this solemnity surpass all others. Examine them all, and judge if it be not so. A great and solemn festival is indeed the incarnation of our Lord, and the beginning of all our good.

\* Marsollier vie de Mde. de Chantal. I. 150. † De Orat. c. 23. ‡ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 40. § S. August. Append. CXI. 2. || Lettres, Liv. XX. 7. ¶ De Adventu Dom. Serm. I.



But this regards ourselves, and not him. (Mark how the moral philosophy of the middle ages breaks out here.) A great feast is his nativity, but it only regards ourselves: for it is a subject of compassion as far as regards him, because he was born to poverty, and labors, and sufferings. A great festival is that of his passion, because then all our sins were wiped away; and, as blessed Gregory says, it would have served us nothing to have been born, if we had not been redeemed. But this was a subject of joy to us, and not to him who endured such bitter torments. Moreover, a great and solemn feast is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, as well for him as for us, because he appeared to triumph gloriously, and we were justified; and therefore the Church celebrated it with that singular exclamation of 'Hæc est dies quam fecit Dominus.' And yet this day of the ascension is still greater, because before it, though our Lord rose from the grave, yet did he remain on earth; still were the gates of Paradise closed, still the holy fathers had not gone to the Father: all which things were completed in the ascension—without which all the rest had been imperfect. Similarly, a great feast is the day of Pentecost; but still, the object of rejoicing then regards ourselves, and not our Lord. But the ascension is properly the most solemn festival of our Lord Jesus, because on that day he began to sit at the right hand of his Father, and to rest from his labors of redemption; and also it is properly the festival of all the heavenly spirits, because they conceived a new joy on beholding our Lord, who then, for the first time, appeared in heaven, under the form of humanity; and it is also no less properly our festival, because on that day was human nature exalted above the heavens, and because, unless Christ had ascended, the Holy Ghost would not have been given; and therefore St. Bernard says, in his *Sermon de Ascensione Domini*, that this most glorious solemnity is the consummation and fulfilment of all other solemnities, and the happy termination of the whole journey of our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God."\*

The mind being thus instructed and sanctified, all external acts and occupation were to correspond with the festival. "During the intervals that used to be spent to the injury of your souls," says St. Augustin, "the sick are to be visited, prisoners are to be comforted, strangers received to hospitality, and discords appeased." "Let no one," says St. Cæsarius of Arles, "on those days treat his domestics with severity. Let us be mild to our servants, courteous to strangers, merciful to the poor, pacific to all men. Let the whole day be devoted to prayer or reading, or to hearing holy conversation."† "Let quarrels cease," say the Fathers, "let offences be forgiven, let severity give place to gentleness, indignation to pity, and discord to peace."‡

In the second place, it is necessary to bear constantly in mind, that the festivals of the Church were, in a certain sense, dramatic—not only by the spirit of their

\* S. Bonavent. *Meditat. Vitæ Christi*, cap. 97.

† S. 146.

‡ Rheinwald *Die Kirchliche Archæologie*, p. 187.

institution, but also in the estimation of the people who assisted at them; for the only key with which we can penetrate into the secrets of their mystic connections with the life of men, consists in the knowledge of this fact, that the Church supposes the mystery which she celebrates at any particular season, to be then actually taking place as if for the first time. Thus, as Lewis of Grenada remarks, “for seven days before the nativity she sings the antiphons, which express her ardent longing for the coming of the infant Messiah, whom she calls by various titles, exclaiming, ‘O Sapientia quæ ex ore altissimi prodiisti! O adonay et dux domus Israel! O radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum! O clavis David, quæ aperis et nemo claudit! O oriens splendor lucis æternæ, et sol justitiæ! O rex gentium et desideratus earum.’”<sup>\*</sup> She supposes that Christ is then about to be born; and to express the intensity of her desire, she repeats in a strain of ravishing harmony, that short emphatic prayer, which sounds like the cry of humanity thirsting after justice, in this world of wretchedness and sin—“*Rorate cæli desuper, et nubes pluant justum: aperiatur terra, et germinet salvatorem.*”

This fact being well understood, the clergy took care never to dissipate the impressions of the festival, by delivering before the people on that occasion any general moral instructions or philosophical speculations, however calculated to give pleasure at other times. We find that during the middle ages, the sermons for festivals were always in accordance with the dramatic spirit of the Church, and calculated to complete the rapture of those who were to be filled with mystical vows and joy. As an instance, witness the discourse of St. Bernard on the nativity. “A voice of joy had sounded in our land; a voice of exaltation and of safety in the tents of sinners! A good word, a consoling word, has been heard; a word full of gladness, worthy of all acceptance! Sing praise, O ye mountains, and all ye trees of the wood. Hear, O heavens, and lend your ears, O earth; let all creatures stand amazed: and above all; O man, be thou astonished. Jesus Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ. Who has such a stony heart as not to melt at hearing this? What could be announced more sweet and delectable! What word was ever heard like this, or when did the world ever receive any thing similar? Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ! O short word, abbreviated from a word, but full of celestial sweetness! The affection of surpassing pleasure flows over, not finding words. Such is the grace of this sentence, that it would instantly lose somewhat of excellence, if I were to change one iota. Jesus Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ. O blessed nativity! holy, honorable to the world, amiable to men, unsearchable to angels, unfathomable in the depths of its sacred mystery, and wonderful to all, in the singular excellence of its unprecedented strangeness! for there was never any thing before like it, and there will never be a sequel. O thou only birth without sorrow, without shame, without corruption—not rending, but consecrating the temple of a virginal womb!

<sup>\*</sup> Vide Ludovic. Grenad. in Commem. Annuc. Concio.

O nativity above nature, surpassing and repairing nature by virtue of the mystery ! Brethren, who will declare this generation ? An angel announces ; virtue overshadows ; the Spirit of the Most High descends ; a virgin believes, conceives by faith, a virgin brings forth, and remains a virgin ! The Son of the Most High God is born ; born of God before all ages ! Who can sufficiently admire ! Jesus Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ ! Ye that are in the grave, rise up and cry out praise. Behold the Lord comes with salvation : he comes with salvation, with unction, with glory. For neither can Jesus come without salvation, nor Christ without unction, nor the Son of God without glory : for he is salvation, and unction and glory.

“Happy the soul which is drawn by tasting the fruit of salvation, and which runs in the odor of ointments, that it may behold his glory ; the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. Ye lost people, breathe again ; Jesus comes to seek and to save that which was lost. Ye sick, recover health : Christ comes to heal contrite hearts with the unction of his mercy. Whoever you may be that desire great things, rejoice ; the Son of God descends to you, that he may make you heirs of his kingdom. Heal me then, O Lord, and I shall be healed ; save me, and I shall be saved ; glorify me, and I shall possess glory. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name ; for he is propitious to all my sins, he heals all my infirmities, he fulfils all my desires ! All this I know on hearing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born. Jesus, then, is born. Let him rejoice whose conscience adjudges him worthy of the eternal condemnation ; for the pity of Jesus surpasses all the multitude and heinousness of sin. Christ is born. Let him rejoice who is assailed by ancient vices ; for before the face of the unction of Christ no disease of the soul, however inveterate, can stand. The Son of God is born. Let him exult who is accustomed to desire great things : because a great dispenser hath arrived. Brethren, this is the heir : let us devoutly receive him, and the inheritance shall be ours. For he who gives his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things ? If man judge these things incredible, let his eyes confirm faith. Jesus Christus natus est in Bethleem Judæ. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after him ; for this is justice in the heart by faith, which alone has glory before God. Let there be added confession unto salvation : and then securely receive him who is this day born in Bethlehem of Judah—Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”\*

Having seen what was the spirit of the Church and the solicitude of the clergy, there will be no difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that the devotion of the people corresponded with both. It is clear, from consulting the history of the middle ages, that the ceremonies of these anniversaries generally acted upon the minds of men with the force of reality. During the great week, every city was Jerusalem,—and Jerusalem about to witness the crucifixion of the Messiah. A

\* S. Bernardi in Vigilia Natalis Domini, Serm. I.



general agitation and fervor announced the entrance of our Lord on the first day. The whole population might be seen carrying branches of palm. So positive an event was this commemoration to the seraphic mind of St. Claire, that after walking in that train, agreeably to the advice of St. Francis, clad in her most sumptuous robes, she left the city secretly on the following night, to exchange, not in imagination but in reality, the pleasures of the world for the tears of the passion, and the way of the children of vanity for that of the Son of God. Who could describe the popular impressions evinced upon that awful day which followed soon after, of which the bare name is so full of mystery, which saw the devout kiss imprinted by such multitudes upon the mystic sign of mourners—or that universal joy, which hailed the festival of the human race, commemorative of its great deliverance from the sting of direful death !

To consent to the beauty and wisdom of the festivals of the Catholic Church, considered in this point of view, implies undoubtedly the admission of many points which are either overlooked or contested by her adversaries—as that the mysteries of the Christian faith are historical facts, and that we should bear in mind the humanity as well as the divinity of our Lord. But to those who would check the tender and affectionate piety of Catholics, on the ground of Christ having been God, and therefore not susceptible of the sufferings which would justify such commiseration, St. Augustin replies in the lesson read during the office of tenebræ. “*Passus est se teneri ut homo. Non enim teneretur nisi homo, aut videretur, nisi homo, aut cæderetur nisi homo, aut crucifigeretur, aut moveretur nisi homo. Accessit ergo homo ad illas omnes passiones quæ in illo nihil valerent, nisi esset homo. Sed si ille non esset homo, non liberaretur homo.*”

The mystic devotion of John of the Cross recognized the necessity of meditating on the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, and of never neglecting to represent it before the mind, as the source of all kinds of good ; and in this it was distinguished from all that false mysticism which has been condemned by the Church.\*

During the middle ages, men were accustomed to meditate on the circumstances of the passion with an intense emotion of humanity, as well as with the clearest penetration of spiritual intelligence, not only attending to the mystery and to the divinity, but also in order to excite their compassion the more, considering our Lord as pure man, and then, as St. Bonaventura says, beholding “*juvenem elegantem, nobillissimum, et innocentissimum, et amantissimum, totem autem flagellatum et sanguine livoribusque respersum.*”†

What a feeling discernment, and what an attentive consideration, of all the piteous details attending the accomplishment of these stupendous mysteries, is evinced in the commentaries, to which the different parts of the office of this commemoration gave rise ! Not to speak of those revelations of celestial secrets which

\* Le P. Dostihée vie de S. Jean de la Croix, Liv. III.

† S. Bonavent. Meditationes Vitæ Christi, cap. 77.

they were instrumental in imparting to the sainted daughter of Sweden, witness the multitude of tender and acute remarks of a St. Bonaventura respecting them; as where he says that our Lord would not call the blessed Mary mother from the cross—"Ne præ amoris vehementis teneritudine amplius ipsa doleret;" and where he speaks of the strangeness of that loud cry with which our Lord gave up the ghost, which alone was sufficient to convince the centurion that he was the Son of God. The blessed Catherine of Cardonna, of the illustrious house of that name in Catalonia, allied to the kings of Arragon, and the first recluse of Spain, whose history is such a surprising scene of penitence, after enduring rigors which seemed to surpass the force of human nature, yielded at last to the intensity of her compassion for the sufferings of our Saviour. It was on Good Friday, in the year 1577, while the nuns were chanting the passion in their church, that she experienced such a violent grief from meditating on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, that she fell to the ground, and was supposed to be in her agony, although she lingered till the Monday after the resurrection.\*

Along with this fervent and tender sentiment of humanity, we find, in the middle ages, a constant vigilance to guard against the errors of false mysticism; "for," adds the seraphic doctor, "all this meditation of the life of Christ is designed to lead the mind from fleshly things to what is spiritual, that we may not rest in knowing Christ in the flesh, but may proceed to adore him in his divinity:—*'Bona est enim hæc meditatio carnalis per quam vita carnalis excluditur, contemnitur, et vincitur mundus.'*"† In regard, therefore, to the divine side of the mysteries commemorated, no want of spirituality was evinced by the men whose thoughts and manners we are investigating; within that sphere no one boasted of his condition, but all contented themselves with saying, "This is the day of the ignorant, the day of the obscure and humble. God is born in the flesh; God dies upon the cross; God descends upon our altars in sacramental veil. Why do you inquire the reason of the mystery? It is sufficient that it is a mystery. All things in God are above reason; nothing above faith. This day human reason yieldeth; for the Word of God—the Reason of God is born upon the earth."

Finally, it must be remembered that the religious seasons, as well as ceremonies, were regarded in a symbolic sense, of which Father John d'Avilla furnishes an instance, when he says, "Let our commencement be humility, represented in the ashes; and let our end be love, figured in the resurrection: and thus we shall have observed a good Lent and a good Easter."‡ "The branches of palms," to use the words of the ritual, "signify triumphs over the prince of death; but the sprigs of olive proclaim, in a manner, the arrival of spiritual unction. For that blessed multitude of men understood then that these things were prefigured; because our Redeemer, compassionating human miseries, was to fight with the prince of death for the life of the whole world, and by dying was to triumph. And

\* Vie de S. Therese par Villefore, 99.

† Meditat. Vit. Christi, cap. 98. ‡ Epist. VIII.

therefore they dutifully ministered such things as signified in him the triumph of victory and the abundance of mercy." Dionysius the Carthusian shows, that the Church represents, in the four Sundays of Advent, not only in the number of the days, but also in the order of the offices, the four advents of Christ to man—two visible in the flesh and in the majesty of final judgment, two invisible in the mind by grace and in the death of the faithful.\*

But it is to the sermon of Richard of St. Victor, *De Gemino Paschale*, that we should be referred if we desired to form a just idea of the sublime symbolism belonging to the ecclesiastical festivals and rites during the middle ages. "We celebrate," says this great doctor, "a two-fold paschal feast; the former of which is commonly called the floral pasch—sweet and acceptable time! and the latter the fruitful pasch, which is its completion. Both are interpreted a passage; both are grateful and full of joy. The first is that by which we pass from malice to justice; the second, that by which we pass from misery to glory. Brethren, to what end do we say this? or what do we think of this transit? What will it be to pass from iniquity to goodness, from calamity to beatitude? Do you see then with what exultation we ought to celebrate this two-fold solemnity? I wish that all would study as much to be good as to be happy: then truly would they be both happy and good. I wish they would as much affect the beginning as the end of the just. 'Let my soul,' says Balaam, 'die the death of the just, and let my last end be like his.' But they who wish to have that end, must study to have the same commencement: they must flower in the meanwhile from justice, that they may have their fruit afterwards of eternal life: for it is from a just and good that they can have an eternal and happy life.

"Let the floral pasch therefore precede the fruitful, that in the mean while, by passing from vice to virtue, we may hereafter pass from misery to happiness. Why do men assemble on this day for a procession? It will be a good procession if we ourselves make a progress in good. What a beauteous procession to pass from virtue to virtue, forgetting what is behind, and hastening on to what is before. O what flowers are true virtues! Let us strew our way with them, and over the enamel of virtues let us pass on. Let us proceed in purity and decorum, that we may make a fair and grateful procession, worthy of the paschal solemnity. O how pure, how joyous will it be, to walk over flowers, and through the sweets of virtue, by the crocus of charity, by the lily of chastity, by the rose of the passion, and by the violet of humility! O how excellent, how delightful a fragrance, will rise on all sides! how will it charm and attract minds to the glorious spectacle! This is the Christian, the paschal procession, after the example of Christ's procession, whom we must follow. Let us mark then whence it begins and whither it tendeth, and by what way it passes, and how it proceeds. It begins from Bethany, it tends to Jerusalem, it passes by the Mount of Olives, it moves upon an ass.

\* *De Judic. Anima*, 2.



This is the procession of Christ which Christians ought to imitate. We must tend therefore to Jerusalem ; that is, to peace as our end. We must seek peace and pursue it. We must decline from evil and do good. We must have peace with our superiors, with our inferiors, with our equals, and with all men. Let us beware then how we disturb the peace of our prelates, of whom the Lord saith, 'Qui vos audit me audit.' We must wish what they wish, and dislike what they dislike, if we would reach Jerusalem, and obtain celestial peace. Hence we begin from Bethany, which is interpreted house of obedience—for we are to obey those who are eminent either in authority or sanctity or wisdom, showing honor to all, according to both human and divine institutions. But our way is by the Mount of Olives, for oil signifies the works of piety ; therefore we pass by this way when we have compassion on the weak, and show mercy to them. Certainly we must remark how this conduces to true tranquillity of mind. For how can he ever obtain peace who is constantly disturbed and angry at what he sees ? In the weak he will always find matter for just reprehension and for merciful tolerance. Our procession then must pass by the Mount of Olives, and our piety must increase till it can be compared to a mountain, that we may learn to bear with tranquillity of mind, not only the least, but also the greatest faults of the weak, and to sustain patiently the infirmity, both corporal and spiritual, of our neighbor.

"Having thus laid hold of the plenitude of obedience and mercy, we must seek more high for perfection : for which purpose it will be necessary to search for the ass, that as Christ approached Jerusalem seated on an ass, we may guard our virtues by the marks of humility. Who would not be filled with wonder to behold, amidst such a solemn and glorious preparation, so sordid an animal ? For my part, it seems more wonderful in my eyes, that a man clothed in pontifical habits should sit upon an ass, than that he should carry in his hand that sweet wood, or bear on his head that splendid mitre. It is neither new nor strange to make a boast of virtues, but it is a great and wondrous thing, amidst so many ornaments of virtue, not to disdain the ass. Thus will our procession move in admirable order, if amidst the lofty graces of obedience and mercy we evince the modesty of the humble. Let us study then to be truly humble, and we shall be able to conciliate our equals : for it is between equals that envy and discord arise. But if we sit upon the ass, and hold amongst them a low and abject place, we shall cut off the root of envy. True humiliation makes peace, not only between equals, but confirms it with superiors and inferiors. Therefore for this seat we must, if necessary, send to a distance, for some have it near at hand, but to others it is far off. They who live shamefully, and commit things to be blushed for, have no need to go far in search of matter for humiliation ; but they who do nothing in their lives worthy of shame, like those who come from Bethany, passing by the Mount of Olives, who celebrate the floral pasch, and strew their way with the flowers of virtue,—these I think are obliged to send to a distance for the ass, and look for matter of humiliation either in the past or future. Thus Paul being con-

scious to himself of nothing, was obliged to go back to the way of his ancient conversation. Mark how he returned to a distant time in search of the ass. 'Ego minimus apostolorum, qui non sum dignus vocari apostolus, quoniam persecutus sum ecclesiam Dei.' Truly, it will not be safe without having this humble bearer to meet the Hebrew youths, crying on all sides, 'Euge, Euge,' because, being children, they know not wherein, nor when, nor how they ought to praise.

"This then is the mode of the procession which Christ made, and which he wishes us to make. Behold in what manner Christ passed; behold with what flowers he strewed his way, when he celebrated this floral pasch. Behold whence, and by what way, in what mode, and whither. From obedience; by piety; with humility; to peace. Remember then to strew your way also with such flowers, if you desire to keep this solemnity.

"And now, if you desire to know the fruit, recur to what is said of Christ, that rising from the dead, he dieth no more, and that at his name every knee should bow. You have seen the transit—behold then the fruit! From death to life—from tribulation to glory! Behold the second pasch! Behold the fruitful pasch! O what fruit! Life and glory! O sublime fruit! Eternal life, with highest glory! Knowing therefore what is the fruit of obedience, let us run with all haste to Bethany, nothing doubting of the fruit, but holding for certain that this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. And as piety is great gain, having the promise of the present life as well as of that which is to come, let us pass on by the Mount of Olives, in the exercise of piety, knowing without doubt that we shall receive oil for oil—the oil of joy for the oil of pity—for 'blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' And let it not shame you to sit upon the ass, or to take the lowest place, for 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' Let nothing therefore be done with contention, nothing through vain glory; but in humility, let us think every one superior to ourselves. O fool, O blind! you who will not hasten where you can find true peace! Let us run by peace to peace—by internal to eternal peace. For there is a peace which is only exterior, and there is a peace which is only interior, and there is a peace which is both one and the other. The first pertains to the flesh alone, the second to the mind alone, the third to both united. The two former we can never have at the same time in the present life, and we only hope for the third in the future. Christ came to destroy the first, to decree the second, to give the third. Let us destest then what Christ hath condemned, and let us love what he taught—for he is faithful who hath promised. Let us love internal, let us hope for eternal peace. Thus shall we celebrate the floral, thus the fruitful pasch. Thus shall we obtain that inestimable joy, which shall endure without change for ever."\*

Reader—we travel slowly through this way, which is not, I hope, found sterile, or unfreshed by the sweet dews of heaven. Here again we must pause awhile—

\* Ricardi S. Victoris de gemino Paschale.

for it will be well to examine what were the sentiments of men in ages of faith respecting the festivals of our blessed Lady; not only because the subject is in itself fruitful of tender and noble thoughts, and that it is impossible to understand the spirit of the middle ages without having studied them, but also on account of the errors respecting them which are so prevalent in modern society.

It is most true, that the Church seems to place no bounds to her gratitude towards the august creature who had such a part in the ineffable mystery of human redemption, pronouncing that new fiat, no less solemn and no less efficacious than that which called down upon the universe the first rays of material light, promised in the first announcement of mercy, even before the divine Saviour. As Lewis of Granada remarks with St. Augustin, "All that we can say in praise of the blessed Virgin, falls short of what St. Mathew expresses when he says, "De quâ natus est Jesus, qui vocatur Christus."\* We have before heard what St. Irenæus said respecting her in the apostolic age, for which Milton profanely proposes that he should be despised by Christians as ignorant of divinity: and similar expressions are met with in all the early Fathers. "O wondrous mystery!" exclaims Clemens Alexandrinus: "one Father of all, one Word, one Holy Spirit, and the same every where, and one only mother, and she a virgin!"† St. Augustin says, "If all our members were changed into tongues, there would not be one able to praise her sufficiently."‡

It is most true that, in the middle ages, the devotion to the mother of God was tender and profound. St. Bernard, St. Peter Damian, St. Anselm, and St. Bonaventura, are sculptured in a chapel of the Benedictine abbey of Solêmes, as being the four doctors whose eloquence in celebrating her privileges were most admired. St. Anselm, that profound and penetrating philosopher, that theologian, whom even modern writers style admirable, calls Mary "the repairer of the lost world, queen of angels."§ The great disciple and master of mysterious song, who had drank so deep of the living water that wells from Holy Writ as from a fountain, who had searched into so many profound truths, and whose genius reflected such a light on every path of almighty Providence, affirms, that he who grace desireth, and comes not to her, fain would have desire fly without wings.|| Coming, in the vision of his soul, to the verge of that eighth heaven, where Mary was in view, he says that the fervent band he saw there halted, and—

" 'Regina Coeli' sang so sweetly,  
The delight hath left me never."

I should never finish were I to collect all the proofs from history of the devotion of men in ages of faith for blessed Mary: but on what ground can the moderns justify their displeasure and finding it to be so? How can any expression

\* In Nativitate B. Mariæ Concio, III.  
§ Lib. de Excellentia Virginis Mariæ.

† Pæd. Lib. I. c. 6.

‡ De Sanct. Serm. XXXV.

|| Dante, Parad. XXXIII.



of the Church or of the holy Fathers be considered an exaggeration, indicating an unguarded utterance, when we know that the Holy Spirit guides the former, and when we find the concert of the latter so unanimous? The true solution can be given in few words. When once a people is convinced that Christ is God, and that the words of the Evangelist, styling him, in reference to Mary, her Son,\* are rightly adduced by Dun Scotus, to silence the subtle distinctions physico-theologo of active and passive, urged by some disputants against the faith of the Church, there can be no alternative for that people but to admit the exercise of devotion to the mother of God, in obedience to the dictates of natural reason and the conscience of the human race.

"Rejoice, O father Adam, and thou, O mother Eve, be comforted," exclaims St. Bernard, "for a daughter is born that will take away your reproach, and the man shall no longer have reason cruelly to accuse the woman, because if man fell by woman, he cannot be raised up unless by woman. What sayest thou, O Adam? 'The woman whom thou gavest to me, gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' These are words of malice, which rather increase than cancel thy fault. But change now the word of guilty excuse into thanksgiving, and say 'Lord, the woman whom thou gavest to me gave me of the tree of life, and I did eat, and it is sweeter than honey to my tongue, because in it thou hast given me life eternal.'"<sup>†</sup>

The devotion of the ages of faith to the blessed Virgin, recommends itself to the understanding and to the heart of all Christians, on account of her high privilege, through regard to the love which Christ our Lord must have borne for her—and none of his affections we need be ashamed to cultivate—on account of her own extraordinary virtues, through tenderness for her sorrows, and finally, from a consideration of the benefit which must result to ourselves in consequence of its cultivation. Of the first motive we have already spoken in brief; and words need not be multiplied to enforce a truth which is obvious to the intelligence, and as clear as any conclusion of the severest dialectician. Let us proceed to examine the other inducements, which are drawn conjointly from the understanding and the heart. It is of faith that Christ was perfect man; consequently, independent even of faith, as supremely virtuous, he must have possessed, in an eminent degree, the sweetest and best of all human affections, maternal love. O who can estimate the love of a son for his mother! How constant is nature in all ages! But lately we read of a young man miserably slain, who spoke no other words at his death but these: "Ah! what will my poor mother say?" One of the most affecting pages of history furnishes an instance precisely similar. The young Conradin on the scaffold uttered this only cry, "O my mother! what grief will the news of me cause to you!" That mother, the Empress Marguerite, was hastening from the centre of Germany to redeem his life. Arrived too late, she consecrated the price to found the monastery del Carmine, in which she is represented with a purse in her hand.

\* Matt. i.

† Hom. II. super Missus est.

Can any one conceive it possible, that the humane, the affectionate, the tender Jesus, who had wept for Lazarus and prayed for his murderers, should have felt no emotions of this kind for blessed Mary, his virgin mother, who reclined beneath his cross, her bosom pierced with a sword? Can we then imitate Jesus, and regard with the eyes of a mathematician, the severity of a stoic, or the scorn of a cynic, that desolate mother, to whom he was so long subject? Again, independent of her amazing privileges, and without any reference to the example of her divine Son, is not devotion due to her from a consideration of her virtues; virtues the most eminent gift of highest God, and such as one might suppose it was impossible for the frail vessel of humanity to receive or retain in a similar degree?

————— "Whatsoe'er may be  
Of excellence in creature, pity, mild,  
Relenting mercy, large munificence,  
Are all combin'd in her."\*

How men meditated on these graces in the middle ages, may be witnessed even in the rules of many institutions, which had regard to them in all that they enjoined. Those of the order of the Annunciation, founded by Jeanne de Valois, comprise ten chapters, which treat successively on the chastity, prudence, humility, faith, devotion, obedience, poverty, patience, piety, sorrow, and compassion of Mary. But it is from the writings of a St. Anselm or a St. Bonaventura that one may best learn how to speak her praise. "Ave Maria; rightly," adds the latter, "is she addressed with the salutation, 'Ave,' who was most safe from all the woe of sin; for 'Ave' is the same as 'without woe.'"

Let us consider that triple woe, from which she was most secure. There is the woe of sin, the woe of misery, and the woe of hell. Of these three we read in the Apocalypse, when John says that he "heard one like an eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." But behold each of these three, alas! is multiplied by three, so that there are nine woes; for the exemption from which this salutation is due to Mary, for there are three woes of sin, and three of misery, and three of hell: from all which being guarded, she is justly greeted with "Ave."

First, of sin there is a triple woe,—from the sin of the heart, from the sin of the lips, and from the sin of deed. "Woe to you who are profound of heart, that you may hide counsel from the Lord."† "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who are like whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful without to men, but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." O how far from that woe was the innocent heart of Mary! Her heart was most clean: it was not a sepulchre of vices; it was a garden and a paradise of the Holy Ghost. Since, then, Mary was so far from that woe, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

\* Dante, Parad. XXXIIL.

† Isa. xxix.

Again, of the sin of the mouth, Isaiah says, "Woe to you who call evil good, and good evil." And in the Psalms we read, "Woe to those who sin with their tongue. The poison of asps is under their lips." O how far from that woe was the innocent tongue of Mary! No poison of asps was under her lips, but honey and the milk of the Holy Spirit. Was it not so when she spake that most chaste word, "*Quomodo fiat istud?*" Had she not honey on her tongue when she uttered that mellifluous sentence. "*Ecce ancilla Domini?*" Since, then, Mary was so far from the sin of the tongue, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Again, of the sin of deed. We read in Ecclesiasticus, "Woe to the double heart, and to the wicked lips, and to the hands that do evil:" that is, Woe to the sin of deed. O how far from that woe was all the work and all the life of Mary! Neither in heart, nor in word, nor in deed, had she the least spot of sin, that the Lord might truly say of her, "*Tota pulchra es amica mea, et macula non est in te.*"

Since, then, Mary was so far from this triple woe, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

In the second place, it is to be considered how Mary was secure from the triple woe of original misery: from the woe of birth, the woe of child-bearing, and the woe of death. Of these it was truly said, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." Woe, therefore, of birth, in consequence of which we are all born children of wrath. O how safe from that woe was the most holy nativity of Mary, delivered from it, as it is believed, by being sanctified in the womb, so that she was never inclined to sin. Therefore, her nativity being secure from woe, we justly salute her with "Ave."

Again, of the woe of bringing forth children. We read in Genesis, when God says to Eve, "*In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.*" O how secure from that woe was the pregnant and producing womb of Mary, that happy mother, who conceived without contamination, and who produced the medicine without sorrow! since, then, Mary was secured from that woe, most justly do we salute her with "Ave."

Again, there is the woe of death, of which it is said, "Woe to you, impious men, who have left the law of the Most High: if born, you are born in malediction; and if dead, your part will be in malidiction." Certainly both pious and impious will die in the malediction of ashes; but yet the woe is only applied here to the impious, to whom that turning to ashes must seem so much more odious, and of which the memory must be always so bitter and so terrible. O how far from that woe of incineration was, as we believe, the holy body of Mary, that body, the most holy ark of God, which was made of imperishable wood, whence it is said, "*Surge Domine in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ!*" Therefore, justly do we salute her with "Ave."

In the third place, it is to be considered that Mary was safe, not only from the triple woe of actual sin, not only from the triple woe of original misery, but also



from the triple woe of hell. This last consists in the greatness of the punishment, in its multitude, and in its duration. Of these three it may well be said, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of earth." To this Ezekiel alludes, saying, "Woe to the city of blood, of which I will make a great pile." The city of blood is the collection of the impious, of which there will be a great pile in the great burning of the damned. O how far from that woe of the magnitude of punishment was the magnitude of the grace and glory of Mary! of whom St. Bernard says, "As much grace as Mary was given upon earth over others, so much of especial glory hath she obtained in heaven." Since, then, Mary was so far from that woe, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Again, the woe of hell consists not only in the magnitude of the punishment, but also in the multitude of punishments; whence it is said in Isaiah, "Woe to their souls, because evils shall be rendered unto them." He says plurally, evils, because many evils await the evil in hell. O, how far from that woe of this multitude of torments was in Mary the multitude of merits and rewards! As we read in Proverbs, "*Multæ filiæ congregaverunt divitias, tu sola supergressa es universas.*" If we understand these daughters to signify holy souls or angelic intelligences, hath not Mary surpassed the riches of virgins, confessors, martyrs, apostles, prophets, patriarchs, and angels? Since, then, Mary was so far from that second woe of hell, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Lastly, the woe of hell consists not only in the magnitude, not only in the multitude of punishments, but also in their perpetual duration. When it is said in the canonical Epistle of Jude, "Woe to them who have gone in the way of Cain, for whom is reserved clouds of darkness for ever;" remark that "for ever," and consider what must be the duration of that darkness which is never to have an end; and how far from that interminable woe of hell, was the interminable glory of Mary, for whom the Lord hath prepared against that eternal darkness an eternal light in heaven! Thus, then, the most blessed Virgin Mary was far from the triple woe of hell, and far from the nine woes; and, therefore, we justly begin our address to her with saying "Ave;" therefore, dearly beloved, let us all say to her, "Ave;" and let us pray to her that, on account of her sweetest Ave, she would pray that we may be delivered from all woe by our Lord Jesus Christ.

But let us consider again how Mary was removed from all sin: for against pride, she was most profound by humility; against envy, most affectionate by charity; against anger, most gentle by mildness; against sloth, most unwearied by industry; against avarice, most refined by poverty; against intemperance, most removed by sobriety; against luxury, most chaste by virginity.

In the first place, consider her profound humility. "*Ecce ancilla Domini,*" were Mary's words. O wonderful and profound humility of Mary! behold an archangel speaks to Mary, who is called full of grace, the operation of the Holy Spirit is conjoined, Mary is assumed to be mother of the Lord; Mary is now preferred before all creatures; Mary is now made the queen of heaven and earth; and

yet, after all this she is not lifted up, but depressed with wonderful humility, saying "Ecce ancilla Domini!" This is against many, who, in prosperity and honors, in graces and virtues, are not humbled with Mary and with Christ, but with Eve and Lucifer! See, beloved, that Mary was also affectionate by charity; for it is Mary of whom Luke says, "Exurgens autem Maria, abiit in montana cum festinatione." She went that she might visit, that she might salute, that she might minister to Elizabeth. See how full of charity was that visitation of Mary! for in the descriptions of it, there are four things named in which her charity to God and to her neighbor were fully declared, for she showed charity to her neighbor in heart, word, and deed. She had charity in her heart: and on account of this, rising up, she went into the hill country with haste; for what obliged her to hasten to that work of charity, unless the charity which was in her heart? We read that the shepherds came hastening to the manger, and that Mary went in haste to fulfil a service, and that Zaccheus descended in haste to receive our Lord to hospitality. Woe to those who are slow to works of charity.

Again, Mary showed charity by word to her neighbor; for it is of her also that we read, "Et factum est, ut audivit salutationem Mariæ Elizabeth," &c. Charity is always to be nourished in salutations to our neighbors, and in words of charity to others. Thus, the angel saluted Mary; Mary saluted Elizabeth; the Son of Mary saluted the Marys who were going from the sepulchre, saying to them, "Avete." Woe to those who, through hatred, neglect to salute their neighbor! Woe to those who salute their neighbor deceitfully, like Judas, when he said, "Ave Rabbi." O how sweetly did Mary know how to salute! O Mary, deign to salute us by thy grace! Moreover, Mary had not only charity in her heart, not only did she show charity in word, but also she exercised it in deed; for it is of Mary that we read, "Mansit autem Maria cum illâ quasi mensibus tribus." She remained to serve and to console Elizabeth. And as she thus had charity to her neighbor, so had she, above all things, charity to God; for it is Mary who says, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum,"—for whom she loved, she sought to magnify.

In the third place, observe how Mary was most gentle and lenient; for it is of Mary that Simeon said, "Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius." This sword signified the sharp passion and death of her Son; a corporal sword could neither kill nor wound the soul. In like manner, the sharp passion of Christ, although it pierced through the soul of Mary by compassion, yet it could neither kill it by hatred, nor wound it by impatience: for Mary never hated the murderers of her Son, never was impatient against them. For if other martyrs were most patient in their corporal martyrdom, how much more our martyr Mary in her spiritual martyrdom! of which Jerome saith, "She was more than martyr." Alas! how far from the grace of the most gentle Mary are those who give way to roughness, and impatience, and anger, as their own domestics, companions, and neighbors often experience!

In the fourth place, observe how diligent was Mary in good works ; for we read in the Acts, "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women, and with Mary, the mother of Jesus : " and mark, that our Mary was unwearied, not alone in prayer with her lips, but also in heart, with holy meditation ; for it is said in the Gospel of Luke, "*Maria conservabat omnia, verba hæc conferens in corde suo.*" And as she was diligent in word and in heart, so also with the work of her hands ; "for to this end," says the venerable Bede, "she remained three months with Elizabeth, that she might, as a younger person, serve a woman of advanced age."

Fifthly ; observe how abstemious she was by poverty. The poor shepherds found Mary, the poor mother, and the poor infant, in a poor place ; not in a pompous court, but in a poor stable. Certainly who ever is poor voluntarily for God, or who ever is poor necessarily, patiently, may be much consoled by the poverty of Mary and of Christ. Far from that consolation are the wicked rich, who seek a different purpose. Nevertheless I am unwilling to despair of the rich ; because not alone the poor shepherds, but also rich kings, found poor Mary and her poor Son : for the rich found them, and came with gifts. The poor found them to their consolation, by poverty ; but the rich by liberality : for while the poor, by poverty, are conformed to Christ, the rich, by liberality, are reformed to him.

Again, we shall discover the grace which sat upon the lips of Mary, if we deliberately collect her words from the Gospel ; for we shall find seven mellifluous sentences proceeding from her mouth, which she spake to the angel, to man, and to God : two to the angel, two to man, and three to God. To the angel she had a word of chastity,—"*Quomodo fiat istud ?*" a word of humility,—"*Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*" This is against the proud and arrogant, who neither think nor speak humbly of themselves, but utter words of boasting and inflation. To man she had a word of charity and a word of truth : of charity, when she so affectionately saluted the mother of the precursor, that the very infant in the womb exulted. This is against the rancorous, who neither do not charitably speak to their neighbors, or who altogether disdain to speak to them ; she had a word of truth, when she said to the servants, "*Quodcunque dixerit vobis facite.*" This is against those who do not instruct others to good but to evil, and who never admonish them.

Lastly, Mary had three words to the Lord. So that she spoke more with God than with man or with the angel : for she spoke twice to the angel, and twice to man, but thrice to God. Alas ! alas ! against many who so seldom speak with God in prayer, and who speak so much with men in vain and often in pernicious conversation ! But Mary had with God a discourse thankful, plaintive, and compassionate, thankful, with regard to herself ; plaintive, for the loss of her son ; and compassionate for the failing of the wine. A thankful word, when she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." This is against the ungrateful, who, alas ! so seldom return the smallest thanks to God for many and great benefits, but rather proudly



turn the benefits of God against God. A plaintive word, when she said to her Son, after having lost him for three days, "Fili, quid fecisti nobis." "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." This is against the irreligious, who never seek Jesus sorrowing, though they may have lost him for many days through their indevotion. Mary had a word of compassion with God, when, at the marriage feast, she said to her Son, "They have no wine." This is against the unmerciful, who are not moved by the want of piety in others, and who never exhort their neighbors. Alas ! now, O Mary, behold still there is need that you suggest to your Son that there are many among us who have no wine : the wine of the grace of the Holy Spirit ; the wine of compunction ; the wine of piety ; the wine of spiritual consolation. Of this St. Bernard says, "How often is it necessary for me, brethren, after tearful complaints, to entreat the Mother of Mercy that she would suggest to her benign Son that you have no wine : and, dearly beloved, I tell you, if you would but piously demand, there would be nothing wanting to your necessity, since she is the merciful Mother of Mercy."\*

You have heard the sentiments of the ages of faith respecting the virtues of blessed Mary, let us briefly observe them in relation to the two remaining motives for devotion to her. And, first, to that of compassion for her bitter sorrows. "O tearful spectacle," cries Thomas à Kempis, "of a mother, and a Son before her eyes in the act of being crucified ! of a mother weeping, and of a son speaking to her ; of a mother standing under the cross, and of a son hanging from it ; of a mother sighing, and of a son expiring ! O magnitude of immense grief ! never to be forgotten, but to be held fixedly in the hearts of the pious !"† "Consider," says St. Bonaventura, "how bitter was Mary in the bitter passion of her Son." Hence she might well have said, with Ruth, "Do not call me Naomi, that is, beautiful ; but call me Mara, that is, bitter : because the Lord hath greatly filled me with bitterness." She was bitter, because her two sons were dead ; and Mary, too, was beautiful, by the sanctification of the Holy Ghost ; but bitter by the passion of her Son. The two sons of Mary are God, made man, and pure man ; for of the one she is corporally, and of the other spiritually, the mother. Whence the blessed Bernard says, "You are the mother of a King, the mother of an exile, the mother of God, the mother of man. These two sons of Mary were both dead in the passion : the one in the body, the other in mind ; the one in the bitterness of the cross, the other in the infidelity of the soul. And, therefore, the bowels of Mary were filled with bitterness."‡

It only remains to observe the sentiments of men in these ages respecting the benefit which resulted to themselves from their devotion to Mary. True, they believed that a great sign of one's predestination or reprobation is his devotion or indifference to the Mother of God. St. Anselm says, "As it is necessary, O blessed

\* S. Bonaventuræ, Speculum, Beatæ Mariæ Virginis.

† Sermonum, III. 2.

‡ Spec. B. Mariæ Virg. Lect. III.

Virgin, that he who loseth thy favor should, with it, lose his eternal salvation, so it is impossible that any in thy favor should perish." And St. Bonaventura says, "The grace of God will sanctify that heart which worthily serveth thee; and he that neglecteth thee, shall die in his sins, as a punishment for such a neglect." But is there ground to justify the censure passed upon St. Bonaventura, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard, by a recent author, who affirms that they ascribed to the blessed Virgin a rank higher than either reason or true piety would assign? There are, at least, some who are not quite prepared to concede at once that such men were deficient either in reason or in piety. Methinks the modern reader ought to have been warned from drawing any rash conclusion here. If the recollects of Liege said that the worship of the blessed Virgin, even in those who had lived gentilely was a sign of predestination, they spoke to men who knew their meaning, and who, therefore, received their words as teaching it to be a sign that they would cease to live gentilely; and if Francis Mendoza said, it was impossible that such a person should perish, his readers interpreted his words as teaching that it was impossible he should not be converted to a holy life; and this precisely on the principle which every one concedes to St. Ambrose, when he said to the holy widow of Ostia, who mourned over the errors of her predestinated child, that it was impossible the son of such tears should eventually be lost for ever. These men judged from traditionary observation, as also from personal experience; and I conceive that the acutest brain would be a little perplexed, if called upon to show what there was in the opinion itself that could justify any man in qualifying it as a wretched extravagance, the excess or perversion of religious belief. On the other hand would it be very difficult to qualify that mind which could not be made to comprehend why a secret reverence for the blessed Mother of Jesus should furnish proof that the sparks of virtue were not wholly extinguished in the heart?

The doctrine of the immaculate conception, though not an article of faith, was yet the natural conclusion of a devout mind; and men were taught by the writers who defended it, that "it would be to no purpose to be jealous in advocating the purity of Mary, if they were not most careful to preserve purity in themselves."

Hereafter there will be occasion to show that there was no point of religion in the middle ages which interfered with the belief in the doctrine of the atonement; but, for the present, hear what say the doctors most eloquent in setting forth the benefits which we derive from the prayers of Mary. St. Bonaventura begins his Mirror with these words:—"Since, as the blessed Jerome saith, 'There is no doubt to any one but that all pertains to the glory and praise of God whatever is worthily ascribed to his Son, so to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,' I have undertaken to express something concerning the praise and glory of his blessed Mother." St. Anselm speaks as clearly\* to the same effect; and the universal spirit of this devotion is expressed in the words of St. Bonaventura, in ad-

\* Medit. Cap. VI. B. I

dressing her :—"Sic in te vis homines jucundari, ut semper in eum, cujus Mater es, refundatur affectus."\* But that they believed her example, her merits, and her intercession to be of great avail to the children of Eve, is a fact which no Catholic will be disposed to doubt.

After hearing the words of the seraphic doctor, speaking on this head, we may rise and proceed :—"Consider," saith he, "how Mary is interpreted the Star of the Sea." We read that it is the custom of sailors, when about to navigate, to choose some one star, by whose rays they may be guided so as to make the desired land. This is the office which is discharged by our star Mary, which directeth those who are navigating through the sea of the world, in the ship of innocence or of penitence, to the shore of their heavenly country. Innocent, in allusion to this, asks by what assistance can ships escape through so many perils to the shores of their country? Certainly by means of wood and a star; that is, by the faith of the cross, and by virtue of the light which Mary, our star, afforded to us, our Star of the Sea, the purest, most radiant, most useful star; for such is the lustre of that star, which rose out of Jacob, that it illumined the universal orb, reaching to the height of heaven, and penetrating to the profoundest depths of hell. Mary is a light to enlighten the world by the example of her life, by the benefits of her compassion, and by the rewards of her glory. Consider, first, that Mary is a light to enlighten many, by the example of her bright life. St. Bernard says, "He that will follow thy ways, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Secondly, consider that she enlightens us by the benefits of her compassion; from which it is that many are spiritually enlightened in the night of this world. And, thirdly, consider that she is a light by the glory of her rewards: for Mary is the most excellent work of God; and as she was filled with grace in the world, so she is full of glory in heaven. "You see, then, how Mary is the Star of the Sea, and how she is a light to enlighten and direct us. Therefore, dearly beloved, let us pray to Mary, that, in true penitence, we may become wholly bitter, that we may be spiritually guided through the sea of this world, and that hereafter we may be shone upon, by the rays of eternal glory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.† Therefore, we may well implore Mary, as Abraham besought Sara, saying, 'Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister, that it may be well with me on account of thee, and that my soul may live for thy sake.' O, then, Mary! O our Sara! say that thou art our sister, that on thy account it may be well with us from God; that, for thy sake, our souls may live in God. Say, I pray thee, O our dearest Sara! that thou art our sister; that, on account of such a sister, the Ægyptians, that is, the demons, may reverence us; that, on account of such a sister, the angels may join themselves in company with us; that, on account of such a sister, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost may have mercy upon us."‡

Having now heard what were the sentiments and views generally entertained dur-

\* Stimulus Divin. Amoris, Pars III. c. 16.

† Lect. II.

‡ Lect. VI.



ing the middle ages with respect to the festivals of the Church, the present would be the proper place for considering the arguments brought against them by the adversaries and lukewarm followers of our faith, who persist in calling for their suppression. "I am filled with joy this day," says St. Augustin, "on account of the great festival of St. Peter and St. Paul ; but yet I am somewhat sad, because I do not behold such a multitude assembled as ought to be found on the nativity of the Passion of the Apostles."\* Alas, what would be his language now, if, in countries exposed to the atmosphere of the new opinions, he witnessed the desertion and silence of the holy churches on days of obligation ! But what need here of many words to show how excellent a thing it must be to "celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought, with high providence, in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just men against the enemies of Christ, in fine, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave,—whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtilties and reflexes of man's thoughts from within,—all these things, with a solemn and unchanging form of emblematic imagery and of inspiring sounds, and of majestic words to point out and describe ?"

Hesiod, in his works and days, and Aratus, speaking of God, express the testimony of the human soul to the importance of regarding seasons and hours in all the affairs of life. By the jurisconsults and legislators of the middle ages, attention to them is considered as belonging essentially to that wisdom of government which should characterize every Christian state.† Who object to the Catholic festivals, but the men who already stand condemned in the Gospel of the marriage feast ! "Cæperunt omnes simul excusare. Villam emi, Juga bovum emi quinque; non possum venire." Here was industry and necessity, indeed, sufficient, one might suppose, to justify the suppression of any obstacle. Yet we know what was their sentence. The language of the moderns, on this head, reminds one of Seneca's objection, when he affirms that the Sabbath day caused the Jews to lose almost the seventh part of their lives, and to suffer many losses, from its not allowing them to work incessantly ; but, without referring to the wisdom of the Church, to the tender affections of her children, and to the charity of the rich, which provided against the injury of the poor—surely an answer may be found in the writings of the ancients, the solid excellence of whose natural reason conforms with such admirable precision to the principles of faith ? The Athenian, in Plato, shows that the gods, in pity for the laborious life of men, determined that there should be intervals of repose dedicated to their worship, to the muses, and to Bacchus ; and hence he says the festivals of religion were an institution of celestial mercy.‡

Let any man contemplate the order of society which succeeded to that of the

\* § 298. † Gregorius Tholosanus *Prælua Jurisconsulti*, Lib. IV. ‡ *De Legibus*, Lib. II.

ancient states, and he will find no ground for concluding that the same wants had not continued, notwithstanding the influence of the Christian liberty. It is not the interests of the poor alone that would convince a thoughtful and benevolent observer of the importance of the festivals. How they stood in relation to those things, is sufficiently obvious to every one. But there is a race belonging to a higher class of society which, I think, would supply him, if possible, with still stronger arguments for preserving the ecclesiastical discipline in all its integrity. Only let him observe what takes place in the houses of the rich : how a multitude of wretched and involuntary captives are there constantly retained, slaves of custom, that stern, that unspiritual instructor, who can have no hopes of any respite from the evils of the world's vanity, unless from the interposition of the Church ; children of a mysterious and calamitous doom, who must perish in unmingled bitterness, unless the festival shall succeed, from time to time, to remind them of a happier world, and to assuage their thirst, by presenting them with the memory and the anticipations of justice. Only let him observe that nothing short of the necessity of an universally recognized obligation can secure them the moral refreshment which is indispensable to their spiritual existence, and, without taking into account the interests of any other class, methinks he must arrive at the conclusion, that the suppression of Catholic festivals, wherever it takes place, and under whatever circumstances, must be always an irremediable calamity to the race of men.

After Anacharsis had visited the different states of Greece, he is reported to have said that "all wanted leisure and tranquillity for wisdom, except the Lacedæmonians, for that these were the only persons with whom it was possible to hold a rational conversation." "The life of all the other Greeks," adds Müller, "had doubtless appeared to him as a restless and unquiet existence, a constant struggle without any object." And it is curious to remark how many writers have dwelt on the tedium and listlessness of a Spartan life, as well as on that of a Catholic country which has retained the discipline of ages of faith. Yet Lord Bacon himself makes the remark, that, "in the distribution of days, that wherein God did rest and contemplate his own works, was blessed above all the days wherein he did effect and accomplish them."\*

In the middle ages, men were industrious and indefatigable : unnumbered monuments have they left behind of having passed an active existence ; and yet we never observe them complaining of the number of ecclesiastical festivals, or lamenting their institution. The desire of every heart seemed to be expressed in that verse of the Psalm, "Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram : ut inhabitem in domo Domini omnibus diebus vitæ meæ ; ut videam voluptatem Domini, et visitem templum ejus." The prayer of the minstrel used to be, that every day in the week might be Sunday,† and Columbus used to observe the festivals of the Church during the perils of his expedition, in the wildest parts of the new discovered world.

\* Advancement of Learning.

† Legrand, d'Aussi, Fabliau, Tom. II. 26.

Who wishes to abolish the festivals of the Catholic Church? Not the poor man, whom they console; not the holy man, whom they nourish; not the meekly learned man, whose labor they assist; not the artist or poet, to whom they supply such sweet and glorious visions. But the Christian pastors are called upon to suppress the festivals, to gratify a few insolent and gloomy pedants, who, in the pride of their political or literary fame, mistake genius for superstition, and faith for insanity. Remorseless task-masters, who impose worse than Herculean labors upon the sons and daughters of the poor; immediate authors of what Æschylus ascribes, in the first instance, to the Furies,—

——— “ ἀνδροκυήτας  
δ' ἁώρους τύχας,”\*

of the fortunes that slay men prematurely. Therefore, they say in their hearts, “*Quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos Dei à terra.*”† “Thou shalt return no more to this world of dreams,” say these men of false wisdom, in the same breath confessing the wretchedness of their own state, “Thou shalt return no more to this world of dreams. Go! forget these mitres of light, these aureoles, these chants, these seraphs. The voice of the archangels has finished for thee. Cast away thy remembrances, thy infinite hopes. Real life is somewhat different from the fancies of youth. Follow us, and we will show thee things that thou hast never seen—the source dried up, the rind withered, the heart broken, the cup empty.” Lo, what a vapor of malediction comes from mortal lips! The earth is become dark and cold. In those streets where a new civilization declares that God in sacramental presence shall never pass, the dust now drinks the black blood of the citizens, which brings with it again fresh retributive murders with unforgiving rage.

Yes, assuredly, “the poor man bent to the earth, oppressed with fatigue, and uncertain whether he will obtain sufficient support for his subsistence, the rich man, surrounded with things in which the world places happiness, and astonished every moment not to find himself happy, ever striving after some object which he does not possess; the man cast down by misfortunes, and the man intoxicated with a prosperous success, the man immersed in delights, and the man devoted to the attractions of science, the powerful, the obscure, all, in short, find in every object an obstacle against rising to the Divinity—a force which tends to bind them to something for which we have not been created, to make them belie the nobleness of their origin and the importance of their end.”—“What wisdom then,” exclaims Manzoni, “in the ordination of the Christian festivals, which gave all men an occasion and an excitement to escape from this state of subjection!”‡

Moreover, it is certain that the mind was confirmed in its belief of all the facts of the Christian religion by means of these institutions. In all the monuments

\* Eumenid. 956.

† Ps. lxxiii.

‡ Osservazioni Sulla Morale Cattolica, cap. 5.



with which they were surrounded, in the temples every where erected, in the annual festivals of the nativity, the epiphany, the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, and in the pentecost, which was the day of solemn mission to the apostles, men saw, and as it were felt with their hands, the evidence in proof of their faith; so that when grown up to maturer years, they could no more doubt respecting the miracles ascribed to Christ and to his apostles, than the facts relating to the history of their own nation, the series of their kings, or any other circumstances respecting them.

Had one only followed the ceremonies of the Church in a Catholic country but once during the passion and the festivals of Easter, it would have been sufficient to have impressed the understanding ever afterwards with a conviction, that the events thus commemorated must have occurred, and in that sense at least to have secured the fulfilment of her desire, where she prays that the receiving of the paschal sacrament may ever remain in our minds. Thus was formed that Christian faith even in those who could not express its origin in clear words; and they were not more able to give a reason for their conviction of innumerable other facts, which they could not have denied, without being regarded by all men as stupid and insane.\*

The moderns read about our Lord as they do about any remarkable historic personage; Catholics, in ages of faith, by means of the festivals and ceremonies of the Church, may be said to have actually lived with him. Religion in the former is but a speculative opinion; in the latter it was a real and personal experience. Custom served them better than innumerable reasons, which, however solid, cannot be always present to the mind. Metaphysical proofs strike but little; and even when they do avail with some, it is only during the instant while the demonstration is seen: for in an hour after, men fear that they were deceived. "*Quod curiositate cognoverint, superbiâ amiserunt.*" The Church, by her festivals and ceremonies, imbued, and as it were, dyed the souls of men with belief, so that they had that habitual faith, which Paschal says is absolutely essential independent of conviction, since we have a body as well as a soul; and that the senses impel us to believe the contrary.

But if there were advantages resulting to the understanding from the institution of the Christian festivals, still more were they conducive to important ends in the economy of the interior life, as directing the emotions of the heart in subordination to faith. What are the poor solitary meditations of an individual, let him be ever so wise and holy, if compared with the realities which just men find in the anniversaries celebrated by the devout people? At each recurrence of the holy time, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom, and the sweet odor of the remembered Gospel imbathes the soul with the fragrant of heaven. This result was not left depending upon the force of any

\* La Hogue Tractat. de Religione, Q. V. cap. 2.

natural and general law ; it was secured by a number of positive exercises connected with their celebration : for at all the principal feasts, holy exercises were renewed, and the suffrages of the saints were fervently implored.

In cathedrals and parishes, the approach of a solemn day might have been easily foreseen, by observing what were the numbers that waited at confessionals. Even to the peasant, remote from cities, the vigil would be announced by the light, which threw its beams far over wood and waste, issuing from the turret of the castle chapel—a well-known sign to him, by which he would know that at that moment the inmates were making holy preparation for a blessed morrow. Every where, from festival to festival, men were always looking forward, and resolving to celebrate each, as if it were to usher them unto the eternal festival of the future world.\* Above all, the fast of Lent, with its repeated instructions, and the solemn rites of the succeeding anniversaries, was always found effectual in sanctifying a multitude of souls for the rest of the year. To celebrate the least festival in the true spirit of the Church, and in conformity to her injunctions, was, as she herself expresses it, “to be filled with the eternal fruition of the divinity of God, which is prefigured by the temporal reception of his precious body and blood.” We see that, in the most solemn commemoration of the highest ineffable mysteries, her chief, indeed her sole solicitude, is to promote the virtue of her children. This breaks forth even amidst the transports with which she prepares to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. “*Hujus igitur sanctificatio noctis fugat sceleros,*” she exclaims at the benediction of the paschal candle ; “*culpam lavat, et reddit innocentiam lapsis, et mœstis lætiam : fugat odia, concordiam parat, et curvat imperia.*”

Thus, in fine, were earthly desires mitigated, and minds trained to love celestial things. Men were purified from all vile inclinations, and enticed to renounce trivial and degrading objects—they acquired an exquisite sense, and an ardent love of what is just, in morals as in art, in matters of religion, as well as in all the relations of human society ; and thus by degrees weaned sweetly and imperceptibly from all that was intrinsically perishable and vain, they were prepared to arrive at the great destiny of their nature—the immortal possession of God.

Already have the just limits of this chapter been overpast, and yet we have still to consider the ecclesiastical festivals in the same point of view in relation to the anniversaries of the saints.

In the Pagan mythology, the honor of apotheosis was granted to the authors of new arts and commodities.—Ceres, Bacchus, Mercurius ; and with the moderns, “*relatio inter divos,*” seems to be considered as due only to the same kind of merit, to the inventors of printing, of steam-engines, of machinery to facilitate the production of articles of trade, or of scientific instruments conducive to the development of national industry ; in short, to the inventors or improvers of things appertaining to Vulcan or Dædalus. These are the persons to whom, as eminently useful to so-

\* De Imit. Christi. Lit. I. 19.

ciety, the supreme honor which man can attribute unto man is given; though, independent of all truths of theology, their merit is certainly mixed with strife and perturbation. Middleton indeed says expressly, that he would rather with Pagan Rome pay divine honors (a remarkable expression from one who professes himself a champion against idolatry) to the founders of empires, than with Popish Rome to the founders of monasteries: "For my part," he says, "I should sooner be tempted to prostrate myself before the statue of a Romulus or an Antoine, than that of a Laurence or a Damian." For such a judgment, the voice of mankind during the middle ages would have had no other compliment but St. Jerome's to Vigilantius—"O infelicem hominem, et omni lacrymarum fonte plangendum!"—Well indeed might the voice of that ancient society have sounded strange to one who had such thoughts, when in unison with holy Church it besought God, while making its offering in commemoration of his saints, that as suffering made them glorious, so devotion might render it innocent, through its Lord and Redeemer.\*

But what skills it to win a fading triumphant laurel out of the tears of wretched men? or how could the vain and sanguinary trophies of human ambition be associated with the golden vials full of sweet perfumes, which are the prayers of the saints? In determining the proper objects of Hyperdulia—which is the service or worship due to excellent creatures, Latria being the worship due to God alone, by faith, hope, and charity, and Dulia being the service due to ordinary creatures, as the ancient schoolmen distinguished†—how could there be a question between the type of Middleton and that of the Roman Pontiffs? The wisdom of the Church, like the Minerva of Æschylus, required that nothing but what contributed to the object of a blameless victory, should be sung to her favored people:

ὅποια νίκης μὴ κακῆς ἐπίσκοπα.‡

And as for the objection of heretics, if those who followed humbly and perseveringly in the way of the cross, were not to be honored by men, would the Psalmist have said, "Mihi nimis honorati sunt amici tui Deus?" Christ teaches us that they are honored by God. "Si quis mihi ministraverit, honorificabit eum Pater meus qui in cœlis est?"§ Moses prayed to the Almighty, saying, "Recordare Domine Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob, servorum tuorum:¶" and Jacob, in his benediction, added, "Et invocetur super eos nomen meum, nomina quoque patrum meorum Abraham et Isaac."—Job autem servus meus orabit pro vobis," says God himself; "faciem ejus suscipiam, ut non vobis imputetur stultitia."¶

Justly, therefore, did the generations of the middle ages conclude, that the intercession of saints is not a contradiction to the atonement of the Son of God: and truly just was it that they should rejoice in the temporal duty of commemorating their victories, when it was their prayer that they might exult in beholding them for eternity.\*\*

\* For St. Stephen.

† S. Bonaventura Declaratio Terminorum Theologiæ.

‡ Eumenid. 903.

§ Joan. xii.

¶ Exod. xxxii.

¶ Cap. xlii.

\*\* P. C. Com. of 1. M.



Let us, however, hear St. Anselm, who had such a tender devotion for the saints and for the mother of God. "What other intercessor can I obtain in thy presence, but him who was made the expiatory victim for sin—who is seated at thy right hand—and who, from the midst of the ineffable glory of which he partakes with thee, implores for us thy clemency? He it is who is my advocate with God the Father; he is that sovereign pontiff, who has no need of shedding other blood to expiate sins; his own blood shed for us flows yet from all his wounds.—Behold, O my God, the holy victim—the perfect victim—which is agreeable to thee. Behold the spotless lamb, who kept silence in presence of his shearers. Behold him, who without having committed sin, charged himself with our sins, and who has put an end to all our miseries by the torments of his agony!"\*

Who can imagine, to use the language of antiquity, that the rich man buried in hell should evince such solicitude for the salvation of his brethren, and that the saints in heaven should have no care for the lot of their fellow-citizens, still combating? If any one asked how could this be, he was referred to St. Augustin, who acknowledges that to understand in what manner the martyrs hear the invocations of men at different parts on the earth, exceeds the power of human intelligence.† If the especial devotion to particular saints at certain places was objected to, the wisdom of the same great doctor could have been urged in reply; for when relating the miracles wrought by St. Stephen's relics, he does not fancy St. Stephen to be busy, and ambitious in advancing the peculiar honor of his altar, and promoting his own private glory and worship, in preference to his competitors, with a neglect of the general advancement of religion and piety among men. It is besides a fact of history, that while the bodies of holy martyrs and saints have been borne along in procession with the prayers of devout people, plagues have been suddenly stopped; so that the anniversary has been ever after celebrated with religious joy in the city which had been delivered. Truly affecting and sublime to the eye of faith is the spectacle of that crowd, which for nine days and nights continually presses round the tomb of a saint, leaving offerings upon it in such abundance, that churches can be built without other means, covering it with their burning tapers, and carrying away, as a domestic treasure, the flowers and pictures which have touched it.

In the constitutions called Apostolical, the faithful are invited to visit the prisons of the witnesses of Christ, from the motive of being rendered partakers of their contest by exhibiting their will towards them.

Of Charlemagne we read, that he made a pilgrimage from Rouen to Tours, following the sea-shore and then mounting the Loire, to visit the Church of St. Martin, for the sake of prayer. Frodoard and Glanber make mention of many great men who repaired to the tomb of that glorious confessor. We read that the old hermit John, who lived in a cave near the town of Sochus, had so great a rever-

\* S. Anselmi Meditat. c. 6.

† Lib. de Curâ pro Mortuis, 16.

ence for the martyrs, that he would often travel over the desert to visit their shrines, one time going to Ephesus to St. John; at another to Euchaita to St. Theodore; at another to St. Thecla, in Seleucia of Isauria; at another to St. Sergius, in Saraphas; and so on.\*

By the ancient laws of France, the being on a pilgrimage in honor of some saint of God, was a legal plea to excuse non-residence where the right of citizenship was desired, which otherwise could not be obtained without a corporal residence in the place, from the festival of All Saints to that of St. John the Baptist.†

Truly admirable was the operation of that faith which preserved with such zeal the memory of Christian heroes, whom the Almighty has signalized as his favorites, and crowned with eternal bliss. Truly efficacious was that honor and veneration paid to them by all, from the lowest to the highest rank of mankind. The anniversaries of the saints kindled wondrous devotion, by leading the mind back to the first ages of Christianity; transporting, as it were, the Christians of the most remote regions into the ancient basilicas of the martyrs at Rome and Constantinople, and thus propagating throughout the world the apostolic spirit and heroic constancy of the first generous champions of Jesus Christ; exciting men, as the Church says, after their example, to despise, for the love of God, the prosperous things of the earth, and to fear not its adversity. The mere recalling of such names as those that occur in the canon of the mass, was sufficient to establish hearts in the love of God for ever. In some ancient liturgies, the names recited were more numerous. In the Ambrosian, twenty-four martyrs are named within the action; in the Mozarabic, the names of forty-six are mentioned; and in the ancient Gallican sacramentary, the names of Hilary, Martin, Ambrose, Augustin, Gregory, Jerome, and Benedict, are added to those of the twelve apostles and of twelve martyrs. In the first ages of the Church, the diptycha sanctorum, or anniversary books, were employed to perpetuate the names of the martyrs whose nativities were commemorated.‡ A Roman calendar of the fourth age was brought to light by Bucherius;§ and another of the second century by Mabillon, from a manuscript in the monastery of Cluny. Although the use of these diptychs of the Primitive Church had become obsolete in the middle ages, the people nevertheless continued to be no less familiar with the acts of the martyrs. On each festival, rythmed sequences, sung before the Gospel, commemorated the most remarkable events in the history of the saint; and it was usual to read publicly in parish churches a short account of his life and passion. Thus we find the passion of the holy martyrs, Valentine and Damian, Bishops of Terracina, divided into nine lessons, for the purpose of being publicly read in that church.|| Many legends still exist, composed in old French rhyme, which in

\* Sophroni Prat. Spirituale, cap. 180.

† Pasquier Recherches de la France, Lib. IV. 7.

‡ Salig. de Diptychis Veterum, cap. 1.

§ Comment. in Vict. Aquit. Canon Pasch, cap. 15. f. 267.

|| Italia Sacra, I.

the seventeenth century were generally laid aside for prose narratives.\* De la Barre speaks of an ancient legendary, which he found enclosed within an iron grate on a pillar in the Church of our Lady at Corbeil, from which he learned certain events that had occurred there in the time of Philippe-le-Long.†

"As often as we celebrate the solemn anniversaries of the saints," says St. Ouen, in his history of St. Eloy, "we ought to recite something from their acts in praise of Christ for the edification of Christian people; since whatever is laudable in his saints, is truly the gift of Christ."‡

Invariably, indeed, do we find the clergy of the middle ages instructing the people with respect to these anniversaries. "Brethren," says an ancient chronicler, "as often as we celebrate the solemnities of the saints with a faithful mind, we ought to consider, that as they continually pray to God in behalf of human labors, so we have especial ground to hope, when we are more particularly attentive to the praises of God on account of their glory. Therefore we must take care with pious attention, that what we externally signify in appearance we may internally hold fast in truth; and then we shall be strengthened outwardly in work when within we are reformed in mind: for the solemnity of the saints is the salvation and joy of the faithful, who now rejoice for that invention whence we are sustained by hope on our journey, that by the grace of God we may come to the society of those whose examples we imitate by faith and works: for they, holding fast the anchor of hope, by desire imitated Christ in his death, and by the cup of his passion, gained the rewards of eternal felicity."§

The reading of the Martyrology suggests some fine reflections to holy men. "For what shall we have to say," says St. Ephrem, "on that dreadful day of final judgment when the blessed martyrs of Christ standing near the throne of glory, will show their wounds, and the atrocious cruelties which they have suffered in their bodies? We, I say, my dearest brethren, what shall we have then to show? what virtues to produce? Shall we have charity towards God and our neighbor? Shall we have whole and inviolable faith? Shall we have voluntary poverty and privation? Shall we have peace and tranquillity? Shall we have alms? Shall we have the affection of pity? Shall we have the spirit of gentleness? Shall we have pure prayers—salutary compunction, vigils, tears, and true penitence? Happy shall we be if we can then produce such testimonies! Then we shall be associated in the choir of the saints, and become partakers of their crown."||

There stills remains an advantage resulting from the festivals of the Church—of which we have as yet taken no notice—which recommends itself to the attention of those who cultivate political wisdom; for there is nothing more certain, than that they contributed to preserve the temporal order of society, by rendering the peo-

\* Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocese de Paris*. X. 42.

† *Antiquitez de Corbeil*, Liv. II. c. 12.

‡ *Vita S. Elegii Episcop. S. Audeni Episcop. Auct. Prolog.*

§ *Chronicon. Mosomense apud Dacher Spicileg. Tom. VII. 523.*

|| *Eph. Sec. de Laudat. Sanct. Mart.*



ple content with their position in the present, and happy in the prospect of the future world.

Cardan, speaking in general of religion, says that the people of Sienna and of Florence, in constructing their cathedrals with such marvellous magnificence, and in lavishing upon them all the riches of art, so that every part seemed equally elaborate, have given an example of wisdom to the world. The temple of St. Mark at Venice and of St. Dionysius at Paris, appear to him similarly as monuments of the highest wisdom. "Sapienter hæc omnia non solum pie," saith he, in his elaborate work on Wisdom.\*

Without referring to the supernatural rewards of eminent piety, it is clear that these rites and anniversaries caused the people, with one mind, and by a judgment fruitful in general utility, to have loves and dislikes in common : a compensation, or rather a remedy, as Æschylus affirms,

"For many woes that wait on mortal life."

True, the whole importance of what are styled principles of taste, as connected with popular manners and the external order of life, has been underrated by the sophists, who govern the modern society ; and that in proportion as it was better understood and more clearly demonstrated by true philosophers. "We must confess," says Fries, "that among the people of the present higher European cultivation in general, to promote this art, which consists in the development and direction of sentiment and taste as an important object of attention, would appear a folly ; and whosoever should entertain such a desire, would seem to have a fancy fitted only for departed and distant times : for in truth, to receive this spirit of beauty in the external life these people are still too greedy, avaricious, and warlike. Through greediness and avarice they have been obliged to limit still more and more the number of festival days, in order that they might work, and collect the more. While they regard murder on a great scale as their necessary, and even as their heroic work, they must employ the best part of their public power in building fortresses and in maintaining armed idlers ; so that, when root and branch are thus wanting, it is in vain to look for the ornament of blossom and flower."† But yet, without referring to the religious operation, remark only these popular customs and traditions interwoven with them, and you will discern with Marchangy, how under an apparent frivolity, powerful and beneficial influences lived and acted. The ambition of men was satisfied at a small expense, by means of the annual circle of domestic fêtes, and local promotions ; their passions were sanctified by immemorial anniversaries and traditions : and thus, in the great relations of social life, were united the intellectual and sentimental interests of positive religion, and the practical interest of the state.

The value of these innocent institutions has been discovered by the fearful void

\* Hieronymi Cardani de Sapientia, Lib. III.

† Religios Philosophie, 195.

which their abolition has left in society. The small money having been suppressed, only the great is put into circulation, for which every one disputes with confusion and rage.\*

Those who attach importance to the refinement of a nation, will observe, that the cultivation of a taste for the beauties of the popular life, is inseparable from the maintenance of the Catholic ritual. The reign of taste in the external social life, requires the retention of the varied forms of festal days and intervals of rest, as well as those of working days and times of business, with their various agricultural and commercial arrangements; and the history of mankind shows that genius can only produce its great forms in the open service of the popular life, and that every worthy expression of the fine arts must be expended in the service of religion.†

Certainly, in relation to the political advantages resulting from poetry and art, that annual recurrence of festivals, which has so often been the theme of poets, as with Vida and Chiabrera,‡ might suggest innumerable reflections; for it would be difficult to determine whether, by means of their intrinsic beauty, in general and in detail, they contributed more to the intellectual or to the social cultivation of man. Whoever reflects on the tender and majestic scenes with which they kept the minds of the people familiar, will easily understand why the ages of faith were, in so eminent a degree, ages of poetry, which Novalis calls the heroism of philosophy, and of which philosophy teaches us to know the value. Doubtless we must ascribe much of the sublimity and purity which distinguished the European imagination, to the influence of the solemn daily ritual, to that essence of ideality and of supernatural joy, which was inhaled with the fragrant incense of the altar. Genius as well as faith was kindled into a common flame, by joining, during Lent, those vast assemblies of believers, in churches whose very stones were each ideas—whose vaults and arches were so many epic poems—who met there by night to hear the solemn rhapsodies of divinely commissioned men, disclosing visions of the threefold world, reminding them of the passion of Christ, the glory of the blessed souls in heavenly paradise, and the dreadful doom of sinners, for ever lost! Who could ever forget the spectacle of this devout multitude, retiring in tears from the portals of the gothic cathedral, under that infant moon, which, in its fulness, was destined to be the solitary witness of the stupendous fact of the resurrection. Truly, genius was not without its share in what was provided by the festivals of the Church, for the beatification of the poor in spirit, for the exaltation of the humble, for the endowment of the meek, for the consolation of mourners. Eternal youth of the soul! poesy that never fades! enchantment equal to that of childhood! Faith gave a sense to the wildest illusions; it explains the most strange creations of the fond imagination. Nothing in them was wholly false. Faith could revive those poor flowers which the world's breath

\* Tristan. Tom. V. 21. † Fries, Religios Philosophie, 178. ‡ Le Feste dell Anna Christiano.

had withered, could make them a second time raise their heads, and diffuse their sweetness in its bosom.

We have already surveyed the beauty of the divine offices in general, as the expression of the hunger and thirst after justice in the human soul; but here, in conclusion, I would invite the reader to view it in relation to the changes introduced by the particular stages of the revolving year, and to remark how it even possessed every feature of the genuine poetic character, being universal, and yet peculiar, definite, and yet free, clear, and yet full of mystery: so that the rule of its perfection, like that of mathematics, was in accordance with the principle of unity in variety.

What a divine beauty in this solemn order, which is unchanging, and yet ever new! possessing at the same time the charm of constant renovation and the majesty of eternal repose! What grandeur in its steady, irresistible movement! Paris was still beholding the sanguinary rage of her revolted citizens; an armed throng, with hands and weapons blood-stained, beat against the doors of a church which stands near the scene of the greatest slaughter, demanding the clergy. Behold the venerable pastor, who fearlessly advances! Are they appointed by Heaven, to give him the long-desired and now expected crown? No: they come there only to desire that mass for the souls of the slain should be celebrated on the following day. What a heart was his, what an institution did he represent, which in such a moment preserved its untroubled peace and order! "Men and brethren," he calmly replied, "to-morrow is the Lord's day, on which the rubric forbids me to sing a requiem; but I shall consult the calendar, and fulfil your wishes on the first vacant feria."

Remark too in the ritual to what profound and matchless taste the mere simplicity of faith gave rise. Witness the ghostly eve of All-Hallow Mass! What a moment is that for intellectual impressions in the course of mortal life, when at the end of the joyful vespers in honor of all the saints, after the "*Benedicamus Domino*," the priest without moving from his place before the altar, exchanges his golden cope for one of mournful hue, and then, in altered and soul-piercing strains, entones aloud the "*Placebo Domino in terrâ viventium*," which announces the commencement of that day of universal grief and pity, when the whole world becomes one suppliant for the souls of the dead, that are waiting their deliverance from penal fire.

New thoughts are ever excited by the course divine of the ecclesiastic year. Whether it be the sweet vernal season, which yieldeth joy to all breasts, or the time when leaves are fallen, and churches beaten by the raging winds, he who loves the sacred offices, continues still as one in whom desire is wakened, and whom the hope of somewhat new to come fills with delight. Short space ensues between the holy triumphs of the host of Christ. At one time it is the "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*" which doth lay open the path that had been yearned for so long betwixt the heaven and earth; at another, it is the "*Lauda Sion*" which yields a heavenly



banquet to the raptured soul. Now it is the coming of the Just One which holds in expectance those who hunger and thirst after justice. "*Rorate cœli desuper,*" you hear them sing : "*et nubes pluant justum :*" soon it will be the sacred orison on the presentation of our Divine Lord in the temple : then prayer, that as those lights enkindled with visible fire dispel nocturnal darkness, so the hearts of the faithful, illumined by invisible fire, that is, the brightness of the Holy Spirit, may be free from the blindness of all vice ; that their mental eye being purified, they may perceive those things which are pleasing to God and profitable to their salvation ; so that after the dark perils of this world, they may deserve to arrive at never-failing light, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The office for the passion has not been changed since the highest antiquity—so profound was the respect of the Church for the early traditions and ceremonies of faith connected with that awful day !

Here this discourse well might leap like one that meets a sudden interruption to his road : but he who bears in mind that the festivals were dramatic, may pardon if it should extol the high poesy of the sacred strain, and invite him to leave the immortal verse of Sophocles to witness the darksome offices of the holy week. The first sounds, "*Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo,*" or those, "*Exultet jam angelica turba cœlorum,*" which announce the magnificent consecration of the paschal candle, will convince him that he has no loss to fear by the exchange. O gracious virtue ! that doth revive, from time to time, the fainting bards of Sion ! how is thy might and sweetness felt, when after a long office, arranged with subtle, profound, but often undiscerned skill, the mystic object of the master minds that composed it is attained—the soul becoming suddenly present at the mournful or glorious event commemorated. The absence of all spiritual refreshment had been endured so long ! and lo now, as if a veil were suddenly withdrawn, men seem to behold every thing described by the sacred penmen, no less than if they really stood at Bethlehem or on Calvary, seem, like Thomas, to have beheld the side and the feet and the hands of Christ, and to have heard, like him, "*Noli esse incredulus*" from the Divine lips ; and feel constrained, through the weakness produced by that intimate sense of the reality, to sink to the earth in adoration—while the rapt crowd sings over them, "*Quando Thomas vidit Christum, pedes, manus, latus suum, dixit ; tu es Deus meus, alleluja.*"

The moderns conceive that these testimonies to the admirable beauty of the Catholic ritual are exaggerated. They flock to our churches at all the principal anniversaries ; they gaze astounded at the ceremonies of faith ; they admit that the music is of the highest order : but their view of all is partial ; they can discern no connection between these things, and what is invisible and infinite. They complain that the season is ill chosen, or that the locality is attended with disadvantages. True, the chants, as the walls and towers of the church, may be made an object of scientific curiosity and of philosophical explanation. The church, as Michelet observes, is a gothic museum, which is visited by men of ability.\* As they enter

\* Hist. de France. Tom. II. 660.

irreverently, and look around to praise the beauty of the architecture, so they perform in their brilliant assemblies the most admirable masses of Haydn and Mozart. What gains their favor, what they like in the church, is not the church itself—not its profound symbolism, which speaks so high—it is the delicate workmanship of its ornaments, the fringe of its mantle, its lace of stone, the difficulty of the execution! How little can these men, who discern nothing but stone and sounds, comprehend a Catholic festival!

During the heroic ages of our history, there would not have been wanting some to remind them of the maxim of chivalrous honor, which pronounces it unjust for those to be at the triumph who had not been at the pain. How should they be now filled? “You see then,” says St. Bonaventura, “what joy is here at this paschal feast! Perhaps, however, you have heard, but not felt it, because you had been moved by no pity in the time of the passion. For if you had known how to compassionate our Lord, then, with a mind not distracted by secular cares or superfluous and curious studies, you would now keep the feast with corresponding sentiments, according to the apostle, who says that, if we were companions in his sufferings, we shall be also partakers of his consolation.” How should they experience mystic refreshment, who have never known the blessed thirst? What vigils have these men observed? With what penitential austerities have they purified their intelligence, appeased their passions, sanctified their heart? They have not studied the mournful symbols of Lent; and now that the veils are withdrawn, altars again decorated, and full choirs, in a circling melody, are taking up the hymns of angels, unseen, unfelt, unheard, will pass before them the figuring of Paradise.

O festival of the resurrection! how dost thou imparadise the soul, drawing the veil from off our present life, and disclosing visions of eternal bliss to the eyes of poor mortality! Whatever melody sounds sweetest here, might seem a grating to fatigue the spirit, compared unto the sounding of those bells of Easter morn which awaken the assurance of the resurrection in the heart of man! This is the day of hope, the feast of angelic love, and of that friendship which unites in sweetest bonds of fraternal affection the wayfarers of human course.

I did note once a youthful pair, fellow students in the same city, who loved, from time to time, to consecrate together these sacred days to religion, happy when they could withdraw from the crowd, to meditate on the past and future.

Christian friendship improved upon the counsel of Alceus. It said not

“*Σύν μοι πῖνε, συνῆβα, συνέρα, συστροφηνφόρει,  
Σύν μοι μαίνομενῶ μαίneo, σύν σῶφρονι σωφρόνει.*”

But rather, “Follow me to the altar of God, and pray with me; to the tribunal of penance, and confess with me; to the great sanctuary, where rejoicing spirits stand amazed at Heaven’s mercy, and receive with me the Lord of life.”

What a charm was there in thus preparing together for the struggle of the earthly existence, when both had the same passions to combat, the same dangers

to traverse, the same Master to serve with faithful zeal ! These young friends felt it; and during the exercise of the long penitential season, closed by the Holy Week, they loved to concentrate themselves in a common sadness, that afterwards, when the days of immortal triumph should arrive, they might lay themselves open to the same joy. So together did they repair to the churches, to adore the cross ; together, to hear the chance of prophecy ; together, to meditate, and to sing the *Miserere* and *Vexila Regis*, before the veiled image of the Saviour. This affliction had a taste as sweet as any cordial comfort ; for during these affecting solemnities, they felt the truth of that devout sentence of Thomas à Kempis, that "it is sweeter to be with Jesus on the cross, than without him in Paradise." How deeply did they understand, and with what love did they contemplate all the mighty and the tender things concealed under the beautiful Catholic forms ? And when the priest, holding the crucifix in his hands, said, with tears, "Christians, behold it, that cross which you adore, the sole treasure and comfort of the unhappy upon earth ! Christians, remember Calvary ! 'Ibi crucifixerunt eum.' Shudder at the thought of there being a spot on earth where the Creator has been crucified by his creatures. Tremble, lest this terrible inscription should be for yourselves also : 'Here they crucified him.' " Yes, these young friends understood and felt the words of the priest, for they, too, had been unhappy, and the charity of Christ had urged them to works of mercy ; and when evening came, they used to remain longer on their knees before the cross in silence.

Now the aspect of all things bears testimony of the Passion. After the mass of Maunday Thursday, every sound of earthly occupation and pleasure ceases : no bell, no music, breaks the solemn stillness of the mourning city. In Spain, no carriage is allowed to appear in the streets ; the king and court, with the meanest subject, going to the stations on foot. "I have seen," says De Bourgueville, "before the change of religion, the devotion of the people of Caen to be so great and fervent, that, on the night between the Thursday and Good Friday, both men and women used to go by night, barefoot, to all the churches, to adore our Lord under the sacramental species, and give their alms to a multitude of poor at the doors of the churches."\* This affecting devotion was encouraged also by the indulgences which the church attached to its observance. It is still a practice observed in France to pass the night within the tomb, in adoration of the sacramental presence there. During the day, the streets of cities wonder at the unaccustomed spectacle of holy recluses and devout women, in the habits of their respective orders, who throughout the whole year, are never seen beyond their cloisters, excepting on this occasion. At Genoa, twenty-one confraternities of devout laics proceed in procession after vespers, to the sepulchre of the metropolitan church, carrying lighted tapers, crosses, and various mystic emblems curiously wrought.†

These two friends repair now, in the dusk of evening, to the sepulchre, to chant

\**Les Recherches et Antiquitéz de la Ville de Caen.*

† *Italia Sacra*, V. 834.



the Stabat Mater with the tribe of holy mourners, who make the solemn vaults resound with a melody most sweet and sad. Why did Bernardin de St. Pierre feel himself so profoundly moved on these occasions, by seeing a young peasant maiden leave her companions, and, when every one was at a distance, kneel down, and, with joined hands and eyes raised to heaven, make her prayer and then put her piece of money into the plate which was at the foot of Calvary? What is it, in sanctity, which moves us, and why does the view of it make the tears gush from our eyes? I know not. Philosophy can teach nothing here: love alone comprehends what is mystic in the details of love; and man, when not depraved, is a being of religious love. Here sing those saintly sisters of Christ's family, whose countenances have so often enabled painters of old to impart to their female heads that more than ideal sweetness which we behold in those of Benozzo on the walls of the Campo Santa at Pisa. Here they raise the sympathizing strain, which con-  
doles with the blessed Mary, till suddenly their tears choke the words,—

---

“Like to the lark,  
That, warbling in the air, expatiates long,  
Then, trilling out his last sweet melody,  
Drops satiate with the sweetness.”\*

This dropping off, through pity, of the sweetest and most heavenly voices, while the solemn procession moves on through the crowd, has an overpowering effect. It indicates that the souls, of which these were only the expression, have been dissolved by the words of that divine hymn. I used to discover these affectionate persons bowed down, with faces in the dust, whose hearts, too full of music to give them relief, found it now in the secret flow of delicious tears; and there, too, oft have I been one of many who could not, to the end, endure the harmony of that unearthly strain.

The profound and intense feeling with which the laity of the middle ages entered into the spirit of the Church during the commemoration of the Passion may be witnessed in many remarkable episodes of history. In the year 1203, after the defeat of John de Courcy, at Downpatrick, by Sir Hugh de Lacy, that nobleman offered the single combat, which the latter declined accepting, at the same time promising a large reward for his person, alive or dead. This offer proving ineffectual, he, in the next place, practiced secretly with some of the followers of de Courcy, who were prevailed upon by bribes to betray their master. Having chosen their opportunity when he was doing penance near the church of Downpatrick on Good Friday, on which day, yearly, say the annals, he wore no arms, but was wholly given to divine contemplation, and used to walk, all solitary, round that church-yard, they rushed upon him, killed some of his retinue, amongst them two sons of Armoric de St. Laurence, who attempted to defend their uncle. De Courcy, however, with his usual prowess, seizing a wooden cross which stood in

\* Dante, Parad. XX.

the church-yard, maintained an obstinate contest. He was at length, however, overpowered, bound, led captive beyond the seas, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the tower of London.

But the day of the resurrection approaches : it is already anticipated in the office of Holy Saturday. Since yesterday, there is a change : there is an expectation of some mighty joy. The walls are no longer hung with weeds of mourning : the beauty of painting, the splendor of marbles, the lustre of illumined gold, again involve men in the strife of vision. It is no longer the *Miserere* and the *Stabat* : it is a prayer that we may so be inflamed with heavenly desires through this Paschal solemnity, that we may be able to arrive with pure minds at the festival of perpetual light. Forms of hope and victory are beheld ; the emotions are too powerful for words : the only language is symbolic. The light of Christ is raised, and thrice the prostrate crowd adores. At length the Church breaks forth in the extatic cry, "Let the angelic choir of heaven now rejoice : let the divine mysteries rejoice : and let the trumpet of salvation sound for the victory of so great a King. Let the earth, also, rejoice, illumined with such splendor, and enlightened with the brightness of the eternal King. Let, also, our mother, the Church, be glad, adorned with the brightness of so great a light : and may the temple resound with the loud voices of the people. Wherefore, I beseech you, most dear brethren, who are here present at the wonderful brightness of this holy light, to invoke with me the mercy of Almighty God."

What tongue can express the admirable beauty of the office on this great day ? What humility may not be learned in the mighty triumph, when he to whom the benediction of the Paschal candle is assigned, pronounces himself at that moment unworthy to be a Levite ? With what profound and tranquil joy does the soul of man hear those celebrated and wondrous words, "*O certe necessarium ! O felix culpa !*"

Hitherto the harmony has been alone of voices ; but now comes forth the majestic priest, vested in gorgeous chasuble, with solemn company, to sing the mass of this triumphant night. Now again rises to the highest vault the fragrant cloud, through which pierces the tremulous lustre of innumerable tapers. All is adoration, holy rapture ; and yet still there is an expectation, for the choir has not resumed its office. But the moment is come, the moment so long desired, of announcing the accomplishment of human redemption and the fulness of heavenly joy. Inflamed with a seraphic ardor of spirit, the priest, with outstretched arms, entones the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and then earth and heaven seem united : the bells are rung ; they murmur in the lofty towers ; the roar of distant cannon answers them ; while within the church, the majestic swell of organs and the burst of the long silent choir seem to dissolve innumerable souls in the ecstasy of heaven. As Dante says of that loud *hossana* which was sung in paradise, "it is such a sound as must leave desire, ne'er after extinct in human breasts, to hear renewed the strain."\*

But now the Church, having sung her treble alleluja, hastens to dismiss her children, that they may prepare themselves for the ensuing day. She briefly salutes the Virgin Mother, and sings *Regina cœli lætare alleluja*. Nothing can better express the feelings of every faithful heart, than those broken artless lines, where each word is joy and love, terminating with the same "alleluja," indicating by their simplicity the overflowing of gratitude.

With many, the happiest moment of life seemed to be that when the priest sung on this day the "*Ite missa est, allelujah, allelujah.*" Leaving the church, each one returned to his home through thronged streets, with swelling bosom, and eyes diffused in tears, and looks that showed the hope of life eternal on his mind imprinted; and with a heart so moved by vehement affection, that he would gladly enfold within his arms every stranger that passed by, as the prisoner embraceth his fellow captives when tidings are brought of their approaching deliverance. These emotions, which every one feels within himself, were permitted formerly to have actually a corresponding expression, as Leo Allatius witnesseth:—"When all who are in the church," saith he, "have followed the example of the priests, and have mutually embraced with devout kisses, the same manifestations of spiritual affection are exchanged even without the church. During the three days of the Resurrection, and even longer, all persons embrace each other on meeting: the men embrace men; the women, women; boys only observe no order, but, with tumultuous joy, give and receive a thousand kisses. And thus the whole Christian people, laying aside hatred, and reconciled with a kiss, is united together in one bond of love.\* During that night, in the third century, the streets of the cities were illuminated, so as to be as lightsome as in the day: torches and lamps cast their beams in every spot.† St. Gregory Nazianzen speaks in rapture of the beauty of this mystic rejoicing.‡ Nevertheless, whether it be in consequence of the suspension which at present takes place from the office having been forestalled, or from some general principle of our spiritual life, certain it is that the soul, during the intervening hours, seems to experience a strange interior struggle, as if it were uneasy at the prospect of being fully consoled on earth.

It was so sweet a thing to mourn at the foot of the cross of Christ! Who would not have stood for ever there, and forgotten his own hopes of a resurrection, to have wept with Mary, and to have gazed forever upon that amazing spectacle of woe and pity? The world, in which this enormous act was perpetrated, is not the proper place for gladness: in heaven, joy is associated with perfection; here it seems to be, at the best, a doubtful emotion, and rather a thing of guilt and shame. Therefore it is that the Church tempers her sweet with bitterness; for even this most triumphant festival breathes a mystic joy mixed with abundant sorrow. The eyes are hardly dry with which we contemplated the spectacle of

\* De Hebdom. et Domin. Græc. c. 22.

†Euseb. Vita Constant. IV. 22.

‡Serm. XLII.



the cross, and the strains of the *Stabat Mater* still seem to rise around us, when we are invited to sing allelujah with rejoicing souls. Great is the glory of the mighty triumph, but the countenance continues pale, the cheeks are still stained with the tears which flowed at the sad sight ; and with a kind of inexplicable, strange desire, the heart still seems to cling to the office of a mourner. We find it recorded in history, that these feelings were experienced by the men of the middle ages : —“ I used to minister to him when he celebrated the divine mysteries,” says an ancient writer, describing the character of Lucas, elected Archbishop of Cosenza, in Calabria, in the year 1204 ; “ I heard him say once,” he continues, “ that he never felt lighter throughout the whole year, than during the fifteen days of the Passion ; so that he used always to grieve when they were finished.”\*

But the day of the Resurrection is come : the silence of the first dawn is broken by the toll of solemn bells ; crowds already throng the streets ; there is a solemn procession to the tomb : the churches can hardly contain the faithful. Christ is risen indeed, and has appeared to his disciples.

The church now displays all the treasures of rare and beauteous kind with which the piety of the people has adorned her. Thus Paul, the deacon, mentions that the holy Bishop Masma, in his church at Merida, ordered the most precious vestments of gold and silk cloth to be used in the Easter festivals. As through streams of sun-light is seen a flower-besprinkled meadow, so now on every side we see bright fair forms, legions of splendors, on whom burning rays shed lightnings. It is the day of saintly pomp, expressive of the deep things which are below, from mortal eye so hidden, that they have in belief alone their evidence. O ye, in blissful fellowship admitted to the supper of the blessed Lamb, to drink of the fount whence flows what most ye crave ! lo, it is the great day of the adorable Eucharist. Let other men beware and tremble, who have not that credence on which is founded every virtue. Say, inconsistent utterers of current coin, who would be Christians without faith, who will not confess your Saviour present in the sacramental elements, because you have not demonstration physical, would you have acknowledged your God during the late days in the person of a poor crucified carpenter, bleeding on an ignominious cross, saturated with opprobrious insults ? See, then, to what a distance your unribbed bark is driven, if once you hoist a sail before this fatal blast, which has scattered so many before you over the immeasurable ocean of evil, there to perish unseen for ever !

And now where shall I find words to speak of the assembly of disciples to commemorate, after twelve or eighteen centuries, this stupendous and adorable mystery of a dead God risen ! O what mortal tongue can describe such a festival ! It is unlike anything else that mortal eye beholds : it is a symbol, it is an anticipation of heaven ; for it leaves nothing present to the mind but the fulfilment of all justice and the reign of everlasting peace. To which ever side you

\* *Italia Sacra*, Tom. IX. 206.

turn, you behold some image of Paradise, some victorious trophy won from death, some proof of things not seen ; every where you behold devout people, hastening to assist at the solemnity : all is movement and reunion. In all other places, to a philosophic eye, a crowd of human beings is associated with mournful or fearful reflections : its presence brings fatigue, disgust, or terror. Here, it is felt as a benediction ; it brings refreshment, delight, and courage. Some persons may be discerned in meditative mood, leaning over the galleries along the upper walls of the temple, listening to the mighty sound, like the distant murmur of the sea, which rises to them from the mere tread of the multitude below, and apparently indulging in the deep and soothing reflections which it is so capable of inspiring. In short, whatever is seen or heard is cheering and ravishing ; the place itself is full blessed ; it would be well to drop dead in it. As the Church herself sings, this place is made by God, an inestimable sacrament, irreprehensible. Here the crimes and follies of the race of men are forgotten ; here the countless sorrows of human life end. It is a place alike for mourners and for those who rejoice. Prophecy is seen accomplished here. All the families of the nations are adoring in the sight of God. All these old men, all these young men, all these mothers, these maidens, these children, who, from the bottom of their souls, have poured out so many tears for the sufferings of Christ : behold them now to-day consoled, consoled with abundance of bliss, filled with mystical vows and joy. It is as if what blessed John beheld in vision had now been accomplished upon earth : it is as if God himself had wiped away all tears from the eyes of men ; as if there was no more death, nor grief, neither lamentation nor sorrow any longer, from the former things having passed away at the voice of him who sitteth upon the throne, saying, "Behold, I make all things new."

And the two young friends went together, at the voice of their sweet and precious guide, to be refreshed with these sacred dews. All within was purified and calm : no idea of the world to obscure the bright lustre of their holy thoughts, —the past atoned for, and the future in the pledge of mercy sure. Then did they pray fervently and long for each other : they prayed also for their families, for all their brethren in Jesus Christ, and, above all, for such as were not given to God, whose understanding had a thirst for truth, and had not been refreshed, whose hearts had a craving for justice and happiness, and had remained empty.

How beautiful and how holy must have been that union of two young men, supplicating, to aid their intelligence, the Divine intelligence, to enable them to resist the corrupting torrent of the evil days on which their lot had cast them, and aspiring with all their souls to the Divine love, that they might be instrumental in communicating it to others ! Admirable power of religion in friendship ! sublime sanctification of friendship by religion ! Wondrous mystery of the Eucharistic union ! To yield angelic love in breasts of flesh and blood, and hope immortal in creatures doomed irretrievably to die !

It is evening, and vespers are now with exultation sung. Some writers have

expressed surprise that there should be no hymn for Easter: but methinks in this very omission one must feel that there is something in accordance with the astonishment which such a mystery creates in human breasts. Yet not without soul-inspiring strains breathing the love of angels, does the Church leave the faithful audiences on the evening of this great day, and on those which succeed it through the octave; for at the benediction, when golden altars, resplendent as the sun, fire the highest vaults of the temple, the "O filii et filiæ" is chanted from above as if by an angelic chorus, making heaven and earth copartners in its joy.

No, I should never finish, were I to describe the festivals of the Church in all the mystic grandeur and pathetic tenderness of their detail, or were I to express all the indications of profound thought and of ecstatic rapture with which they were received and celebrated in the ages of faith. If a feeling of regret at the shortness of the earthly course were ever admissible to a Christian, methinks it might arise from a wish to have celebrated oftener these great festivals, to have meditated oftener on these stupendous mysteries, ere death his fatal term should prescribe, and faith be changed into possession. Life is clearly too brief to enable us to enjoy the thousandth part of the sublime and rapturous emotions which they are capable of yielding to our nature. But these are themes for men, who are of angels taught, of heaven inspired with gifts of the highest muse, and, as one of ancient fame hath said, in circumstances similar, "for me, sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing amongst many readers of no empyreal conceit," to attempt to develop them is presumptuous and vain.

Durandus wrote his austere complaints on the insensibility of men to the sublime symbolism of the Catholic Church in the thirteenth century, in the age when Christian art shone with so much splendor, when an enthusiastic and spiritualized society pushed forward with all its efforts towards a marvellous ideal, and sought to escape from the realities of terror, by symbolizing life. Oh, if he had lived in later times, no one would accuse him of rigorism, and of having merited the satiric epitaph composed for him by his enemies,—

*"Durus Durandus jacet hoc sub marmore duro."*

Justly would he have wept on beholding ages of prosaic dulness, of reactions full of hatred and of avaricious industry, when men had lost the sense of religious art, and had grown to regard the temples of their fathers and the ceremonies of faith as the hieroglyphic traces of a former world. These rites and commemorations were instituted, as the sacred Scriptures were written,\* that men might believe; and now that the inference of Duns Scotus is rejected,† and theology is reduced to bare action, resting upon no philosophy of life; when men, loving vanity and seeking after lies, desire rather that they may not believe, and that a pompous affectation of virtue should uphold the civilization which is to exclude

\* Joan. XX.

† In Lib. Sentent. Prolog. IX. 4.



the manners of Catholic ages, we need only conclude that the boasted progress of society, whatever their most subtle doctor may affirm in its praise, is in truth nothing more than a verification of the sentence of St. Augustin, "*Omnis creatura mutabilis, solus Deus immutabilis.*"\*

---

## CHAPTER IX.

**S**UCH, then, is the evidence furnished by the institution and observance of the Catholic rites and festivals, and by the whole history of the Roman Liturgy. Thus was the mystic society which had been diffused over the world impelled by a secret and insatiable thirst to seek, in the symbolic representation and commemoration of things invisible, a more perfect union with justice than could be obtained by an application to the realities of the present external nature. Incidentally, it is true, we have been led, during the investigation, to witness many proofs of the piety of the middle ages; but we should hardly have a full conception of the prevalence and intensity of the blessed thirst, if we were not to direct our attention expressly in conclusion to this point, in order to observe what a general spirit of devotion existed during this long period of the history of man.

Every act of pure morality, and every thought of true greatness,—whatever can serve the necessities or exalt the dignity of human nature,—all that excites the genius of the artist, or impels the poet to develop the ideal forms of his imagination in harmonious words,—must arise from that secret thirst after justice, which, from being inherent in the soul of man, is augmented, directed, and finally satisfied by grace.

"All our inclinations," says Novalis, "appear to be nothing but religion in some sense or other. The heart seems as if it were the religious organ. Perhaps the highest produce of the productive heart is nothing but heaven."† Morality, even in the sense of natural reason, as expressed by the ancient philosophers, recognizes the supreme pre-eminence of devotion above every other obligation. Cicero sums up the duties of man in this order: the first being what he owes to the gods; the second what are required by his country; and the third, what he must fulfil towards his parents.‡ It is needless to remark that the Christian philosophy places piety in the van, since it declares that from that source every meritorious action must take rise; but what I have engaged to show

\* De Trinit. VI. 6.

† Schriften, II. 306.

‡ De Officiis, Lib. I. 45.

in this place is the conformity between this axiom and the manners of society during the middle ages, which when viewed in this particular point of view, will appear more than ever justly entitled to the designation of "Ages of Faith." The proposition cannot be better stated than in the words used by a modern author, in other respects of no great weight, but which will answer our immediate purpose sufficiently well, since, in the eyes of his contemporaries, of whose opinions he is the steady advocate, they must possess the merit of unquestionable impartiality :—"The middle ages," saith he, "were more distinguished by a religious character than any other period of which the history of the world makes mention ; and this feature, which belonged to society in general, was the property of almost all its individual members, imbuing the light love-strain of the minstrel with its deeper pathos, giving a soft and solemn beauty to many of the customs of domestic intercourse, and blending the soldier's dream of glory with one of immortality and heaven." So far this writer, speaking as to the general fact, which, however, is better stated in the following words, by a French historian :—"In the abyss of the Passion lies the thought of the middle age. This age is wholly contained in Christianity, as is Christianity in the Passion. Literature, art, the different developments of the human mind from the third to the fifteenth century,—all is suspended on this eternal mystery."\*

We may remark here, in confirmation of the literal truth of this statement, that it was not merely on the sixth feria of the great week that the faithful people of the middle ages commemorated the mysterious day on which man was made and redeemed : throughout the whole year, it was observed as a day of abstinence and retirement, and in many places there were ceremonies and other usages expressly instituted in memory of our Lord's passion. Ferdinand de Bazan ordained that, on every Friday, in order to remind the people of the death of the Saviour, at the sixth and ninth hour, the bells of the churches of Palermo should toll with a lugubrious sound :† and in the bishopric of Ratisbon, as also in many other dioceses, the great bells were similarly tolled at nones, on Friday ; on hearing which, the prayer, "Respice in me Deus," or the psalm, "Deus, Deus meus, respice in me," or some other supplication, was repeated by every tongue, and indulgences were attached to this devotion. In Milan, there were no fewer than nineteen confraternities of laymen, under the title of the Holy Cross, whose especial object was to erect and repair, throughout the province, monuments that would constantly recall to the minds of the people the cross and passion of their Redeemer.‡

Man, in Paradise, fell from innocence through the temptation of a foreign enemy ; and, on earth, he falls from grace through the influence of his brethren. Like one individual, society itself experiences these awful moral vicissitudes : it falls like one man, generally, by a gradual and imperceptible progress of degra-

\* Michelet, *Hist. de France*, I. 637. † *Sicilia Sacra*, Not. I. 262. ‡ *Italia Sacra*, IV. 27.

dation. "For," says St. Odo, in his Collations, "as we do not perceive in what manner the beauty of the body changes in old age, so, also, our mind, we being unaware, frequently is bent from the state of rectitude and from the form of religion, unconsciously grows old, and decays according to the words, 'Traxerunt me, et non sensi.'"<sup>\*</sup> Indifference to religion, in its progress through society, advances like the hand of a clock, "Quam progredi non videmus, progressam autem videmus."

Could the men of former ages be permitted again to visit the regions in which they had once thought that faith had taken imperishable root, great would be their astonishment! They would hear, indeed, on all sides, even from those whose cheeks were not yet clothed with down, much boast of reformation and morality, renovated light, and evangelic lore; but what likeness would they find to that grain of mustard-seed, which a man sowed in his garden, which increased and became a great tree, so that the fowls of the air lodged in its branches? Or what similitude to that leaven, "which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened?"<sup>†</sup>

One of the first characteristics of the religious fervor of the middle ages which presents itself in history, is its universality: devotion not being confined to any particular order or condition of men. Sanctity was not confined to cloisters, or to the chair of St. Peter: it was found in the walks of secular life, and upon worldly thrones. The words of Isaiah were literally accomplished in the middle ages, "The nations walked in his light, and kings in the splendor of his rising."<sup>‡</sup> These mighty waters, which now, like a savage torrent, precipitate themselves in straight lines against the Church, leaving nothing standing but what is absolutely part of the very Rock which can never be overthrown,—in those days flowed gently, and in a varied undulating course through the divine garden, refreshing its tender plants, fertilizing and covering with flowers of ten thousand lovely hues all the adjacent soil. "True," as St. Clement said, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, "the laity had particular duties different from those of priests;" but during those ages, if a person in the ranks of secular society were studious and thoughtful, fond of retirement, walking not in the trodden paths, but looking to the divine mysteries and to the ceremonies of faith as the true medicine for sorrow, it was not concluded that he was forsaking the post which Providence had assigned to him, or introducing confusion into social hierarchy; for that nice discrimination of offices which our modern civilization has sanctioned, where it was not unknown to our ancestors, was expressly condemned by them, as in contradiction to the spirit and letter of the Christian law, which declares that without holiness no man should ever see God. In the laity, therefore, as well as in the ecclesiastical order, sanctity was the first duty and the highest honor of every one who professed himself a disciple in the school of Christ.

<sup>\*</sup> St. Odonis, Collat. Lib. I. Bibliothec. Cluniac.

<sup>†</sup> Luke xiii. 19.

<sup>‡</sup> lx. 3.



"No !" exclaims St. Jerome, "it is not ecclesiastical dignity which makes the true Christian. The centurion, Cornelius, though a pagan, was purified by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Daniel, while a child, was the judge of old men. Amos, from the bosom of poverty and ignorance, was raised to be a prophet of the Lord. And David was sought for among shepherds, when he was to be established King of Israel. It was the youngest, the last of the disciples, who obtained the greatest marks of the love of his Divine Master."\*

St. Anselm, while a monk at Bee, in a letter of advice to his friends, Odo and Lanzo, reminds them of the words of truth, that but few are chosen ; and adds, with solemn eloquence, "*Quapropter, quicumque nondum vivit ut pauci, aut vitam suam corrigendo inter paucos se colligat, aut cum certitudine reprobationem timeat.*"†

We find the ancient monk of Ratisbon, whose account of his temptations, various fortunes, and writings, has been published by Mabillon, speaking of his having edited a book entitled "*A Manual written for the Admonition of Clerks and Laics.*"‡

Alcuin, in his book, "*De Virtutibus et Vitiis,*" which is addressed to Count Guy, after reminding that nobleman of the care required for his salvation, speaks to him as follows :—"And be not alarmed by the habit of a laic which you wear, or by the secular life which you lead, as if under this habit you could not penetrate through the gates of celestial life. For as the blessedness of the kingdom of God is preached to all without distinction, so the entrance to this kingdom is open equally, according to the degree of merits, to every sex, age, and person. There it is not distinguished who on the earth has been a laic or a clerk, rich or poor, young or old, master or slave; but the eternal glory crowns every man according to his works." Iona, in his celebrated book, "*De Institutione Laicale,*" written in the ninth century, and printed by Dacherius from a manuscript 500 years old, which he found in the Abbey of Corby, shows that the law of Christ is to be observed, not especially by Clerks, but generally by all the faithful.§

The Abbot Smaragdus, in his work entitled "*Via Regia*" addressed to the Emperor Louis le Debonnaire ; and Gilles de Rome, in his "*Mirror of Chivalry for the Instruction of Princes,*" argues on the same ground, desiring them to remember death and judgment.|| What a heavenly air breathes through all the Laical Institution, which was written during the reign of Charles the Bald ! Here is proof that it was not dry, cold morality which used to be addressed to the secular society of the middle ages ! "It must be our care, then," says Iona, "that nothing of the corruption of the old man may remain in us. Christ, not in part is crucified, but wholly, that we should die to all sin and live to God. But he lives to God who follows the footsteps of Christ in humility, sanctification, and

\* S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Heliodor.

† Epist. Lib. I. 2.

‡ Vet. Analecta, 118.

§ Lib. I. cap. 20. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

|| Mir. Lib. III. c. 18. 48.

piety : he, I say, lives to God and is made his temple, who is clothed with these celestial precepts which form the raiment of the new man, which he shall want who with a stained robe shall repair to the nuptial feast. If, therefore, as the blessed Jerome saith, any one shall be found in the day of judgment under the name of a Christian, not having the wedding garment, that is, the robe of the celestial man, but a stained robe, that is, the garment of the old man, he will be immediately addressed in these words, ‘Amice quomodo huc intrasti?’ and he will be speechless. In that time there will be no place for penance, nor power of denial, when all the angels, and the world itself, shall be witness of sins. Therefore every one of the faithful should know, that unless he be clothed with this new man, namely, with our Lord Jesus Christ, though at present he may walk in purple and fine linen, adorned with gold and gems, yet will he appear miserably and tearfully naked in the eyes of the Divine Majesty. And if he should depart in this nakedness, not only will he be reproved by Christ the King, hereafter, but also he will be excluded for ever from the marriage feast. Now if any one desire to know what is the raiment of this new man, let him know that it consists in innocence, patience, benignity, gentleness, faith, humility, charity, modesty, chastity, without which, no man shall see God.”\*

During the middle ages, the laity, whatever may have been the excesses into which they were occasionally betrayed, can never be said to have borne any resemblance to that stony people, from which, according to Pindar,† their name had been originally derived. They were far from being that durum genus which Deucalion and Pyrrha produced :‡ or, as Pindar styles it, λίθινον γένος that race of stones.

The eulogium, “Laicus sed religiosus,” which is bestowed on the brother of Valentinian, in the chronicles of Monte Casino, indicates no character that was uncommon in the world.§ The popular race had now been softened and moulded by the power of that religion, which appeared equally divine and miraculous to the shepherds of Judea in the stable of Bethlehem, to the empress of Rome in the catacombs, and to the chiefs of the barbarians under the forests of Germany.

The author of the book entitled on the Use of Romances objects to history, on the ground that its characters are always equivocal. But the argument does not hold with respect to the indications which it exhibits in the laity, during the ages of faith, of the thirst for justice. They now desired to hear that tender petition of the Church in their behalf, when at the paschal solemnities, after praying for her clergy, she adds, “Et devotissimum populum.” The heroism and activity, the magnanimous and joyous character of the middle ages, have struck every one conversant with their history ; and yet the piety of the laity in those times would now seem fitting only in a cloister.

\* Jonæ Aurelianensis Episcop. de Institutione Laicale, Lib. I. cap. 2. apud Dacher. Spicil. leg. I.

† Olym. IX.

‡ Virg. Georg. I. 63.

§ Chronic. Casinensis, cap. 13.

Nocturnal vigils, sacred lessons at repasts, the observance of three Lents in the year, belonged to the devotion of such princes as Charlemagne, Alfred, Godefroi de Bouillon, Louis VII. of France, and many others.

We read of youths being sent to the royal court, in order to be instructed in divine doctrines and monastic discipline ;\* of martyrs who had been educated in the scholastic doctrines of our Lord in the hall of the palace.† What greater statesman than Nicholas Acciajoli, the high steward of the King of Naples, who preserved the crown to his sovereign, and in the year 1363, fitted out ships at his own expense, for the service of Florence his native country ? Who more richly endowed with the goods of fortune ? He was master of cities and castles both in the kingdom of Naples and in Greece. Yet what was his ruling passion ? It was to build churches and monasteries, and to enrich altars. He had a predilection, says Pignotti, for the Carthusian monasteries, having restored that of Naples, and rebuilt that of Florence, the architecture of which, even to the disposition of the cells, being his design. "Perhaps," adds this writer, "his spirit in the midst of the laborious agitations attendant upon great affairs, turned itself with pleasure to the contemplation of the life of those who had retired from civil tempests into the port of solitude."‡

Ughelli says, that the munificence of the princes of Beneventum to churches and monasteries was so great, that he fears his statement will not be credited. It equalled that of kings and emperors. They seem to have given their whole principality to the Church.§—But what country ever produced more heroic, more devoted and magnanimous men, than these pious dukes of the Longobards ? Hear the inscription on the tomb of Arichis, Prince of Beneventum, which was composed in the time of Charlemagne :—

"Hic Arichis dormit magni pulcherrima proles  
Unica spes patriæ, murus, et arma suis.  
Religione patrem, dulcisque parentibus usque  
Nullus plus voluit amplius, aut potuit.  
Seu Abraham genitor Isaac sic iste peregit :  
Oblatus tacuit, jussa parentis agens.  
Traditus ob patriæ, populi cunctique salutem  
Se opponens voluit pro pietate mori."||

It is curious to remark, that the gravity of the middle ages appears even in the kind of sacerdotal dignity which the writers of that period ascribe to noble manners.—Thus Christine de Pisan says of Louis, duc d'Anjou, brother of King Charles V. "Moult sages homs estoit et avisiez en tous fais, hault et pontifical en maintien."¶ And of Charles, duc de Bourgogne, his third brother, she says,

\* Vitâ S. Laudeb. Ep. Traject. ad Mos. n. 3. 596.

† Acta Martyr. S. Ragnebert. n. 2. p. 619.

|| Italia Sacra, VIII. 36.

‡ II. chap. 6,

§ Italia Sacra, VIII. 60.

¶ Part. II. c. 11.



"Prince estoit de souverain sens et bon conseil, doulx estoit et amiable à grans, moyens, et à petis : noble et pontifical en court et estat magnificent."\*

Guntchramnus, the best of the Merovingian kings, is described by Fredegaire as being like a priest among priests.†

Petrus Diaconus relates, that when the Emperor Lothaire came to the monastery of Monte Casino to appease the dissensions which had broken out respecting the election of an abbot, he never ate or drank from the first hour of the day till vespers ; "et sub imperiali clamide alterius militiæ tyrocinium ostendebat." "During the whole expedition on which I was with him," says this monk, "he used to hear mass for the dead at the first dawn, after which he heard mass for his army ; and lastly, he heard the mass of the day. While staying in the monastery, he used to go about the cloisters, and all the offices, as if he were abbot or dean, desiring to examine how every one lived under the blessed Benedict, and he used to go barefooted to all its churches. Yet he never absented himself from the company of the bishops, archbishops, and abbots, that he might fulfil what is written, 'Cum sapientibus sermocinatio ejus;' and notwithstanding all his occupations, he was the staff of the blind, the food of the hungry, the hope of the wretched, the comfort of mourners : and he so shone in each virtue, as if besides it he possessed no other."‡

Their manner too of expressing themselves, though it would be now felt inconvenient in legislative assemblies, was nevertheless that of men who studied wisdom ; like that of Dante, of whom Philip Villani says, "In locutione tardissimus, et qui nunquam inpræmeditate loqui videretur." Lo, how nobly stands, in that romantic fabling which keeps so near to truth, among those worthies of the house of Este, whose figures represented in the shield, caused Rinaldo to wake up from his lethargy, and to cheer his face.—

"Almerike, first created Lord Marquis of Ferrara,  
Founder of many churches, that upthrew  
His eyes like one that used to contemplate."§

The knights of chivalrous celebrity, in the poems and annals of former ages, are all, more or less, described as men of this character :—"Very early in the morning he rises, and goes to hear mass ; then mounts on horseback with his squire, and rides on. After mid-day 'il entre en une forest moult grande et chevauche longue espace de temps moult pensif.'" || The ideal, in the poet's mind who drew these portraits, was that of men who thirsted after a higher order of existence and who would have thanked Heaven, in the words of Chateaubriand, that their life was not built on the earth as solidly as the towers in which they passed their youth.

\* II. 13.

† Fredeg. ap. Scr. r. fr. T. II. 414.

‡ Hist. Cassinens. Sæc. VII.

§ Jerusalem Delivered, XVII.

|| Gyren le Courtois, f. 10.

"Est hæc vita brevis, stimulis circumdata sævis  
Qui se credit ei, torpet amore Dei."

Such were the lines of the ancient original inscription on the tomb of Count Raynaldo de Avenel, in the cathedral of Catana, who died in the beginning of the twelfth century.\*

It might seem vain to multiply examples; but the language of the ancient writers in this respect is so picturesque, that a few might always be proposed in history, without danger of causing fatigue to any reader. Christine de Pisan relates, that King Charles V. of France used to rise at six or seven o'clock, when to his chamberlain and other servants he would always show a joyous countenance. Then after the sign of the cross and his words to God, as being very devout, he used to entertain himself familiarly with them while he was dressed for the day. He used to take pleasure in what was said by the simplest among them. When fully adjusted, his breviary was brought to him, the chaplain being at his side to assist him in saying the canonical hours according to the ordinary of the time. At eight o'clock he went to mass, "*laquelle estoit célébrée glorieusement chascun jour à chant mélodieux et solemnel;*" then he made a retreat in his oratory, during which time, low masses were continually said before him. At the issue from the chapel, all kinds of people, rich or poor, could speak to him; and he, with the greatest affability, would listen to their requests, and would remit them to his master of the requests. Then he went to the council, and if business did not occupy him, he sat down to table at ten o'clock. While he was at the repast, music was performed before him. On rising from table he received ambassadors and other strangers. After various conversation, which used to last for two hours, he went to take repose during one hour; after which he used to amuse himself with his most private friends, and then he went to vespers; after which he walked in the garden of his hotel of St. Paul, where the queen and other women used to attend him with the children. But in the winter season he used to spend this interval in hearing different fine histories of the holy Scriptures, or of the deeds of the Romans, or the moralities of the philosophers, read aloud, till the hour of supper, which was always early and of a slight nature; after which he took some little diversion, and then retired to rest: and thus in continual order did this wise king pass the course of his life.†

That provision was made in all the private dwellings of the laity for nourishing a spirit of prayer, appears from the fact formerly observed, of the chapel being a constant appendage to the castle. In the decrees collected by Ives de Chartres, we read that "every one of the faithful should have an oratory in his house, in which he may pray, but that mass must not be celebrated there, unless when such a privilege has been specially granted."‡

\* Sicilia Sacra. I. 528. † Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du Sage Roy Charles V. chap. 26.

‡ Decret. Pars III. de Ecclesia, c. 76.

Father Dosithee, in his life of St. John of the Cross, relates, that the doctrines of the Gospel had struck such deep root in the hearts of the inhabitants of Baëce, which is a great city in Spain, that lay persons lived there like ecclesiastics, and ecclesiastics like monks.\*

St. Theresa says, that the two merchants of Medina, who came with her to assist at the first mass in the chapel which St. John of the Cross had arranged in the poor cabin at Durvele, were so moved by what they saw there, that they shed a flood of tears. She adds, that gentlemen of the neighborhood came to express their obligation to her for having given to that country such a fountain of benediction. Among these men of quality of the neighborhood who came to Durvele from time to time to converse with St. John of the Cross, was Dom Louis de Toledo, near relative of the Dukes of Alba. This nobleman had five towns under his domain. The two merchants declared, that for all the world they would not have missed seeing what they saw there, so admirable did that poverty appear to these men of riches.†

Examples of this kind must strike all men as very remarkable, if they consider what peculiar obstacles are presented in that rank of life to the influence of ascetic principles. Remark only what passes before you at present. Observe narrowly these poor soldiers, these roughvested seamen, in the church. Might not one almost take them for monks? Pass on now nearer the altar, and mark those well-dressed citizens, those luxurious sons and daughters of the rich. What would you take them for? I do not ask whether they remind you of monks, or persons devoted to religious perfection, but have they the air of what Bossuet calls Christian severity? Would it not be ridiculous to see them kiss the cross, or perform any act which did not seem required by fashion and habit? Yet this description of persons remember, in the middle ages, possessed the faith and the piety of the poor.

"Pious merchant,"—"nobles et dévotes personnes," was the common style of publicacts, even so late as in the sixteenth century:‡ for to what Shakespeare reckons the king-becoming graces—temperance, lowliness, devotion§—every man of elevated rank formerly was required to lay claim. The title of the Countess Matilda in the archives of Monte Casino, is beautifully expressive of this spirit—"Matilda, Dei gratia si quid est."||

"The royal virtues," says St. Isidore, "are two—piety and justice. But piety is more praised in kings, for justice by itself is severe."¶ It is the remark of a German historian, that the insignia of the kingly state, during the middle ages, were all of sacerdotal origin.\*\*

This ideal of sanctity in the person of kings was beheld in many whom the Church has not canonized, as Dagobert, Louis-le-Débonnaire, Robert, Louis-le-

\* Lib. IV.

† Vie de S. Jean de la Croix, par la Père Dosithée.

‡ Monteil, Hist. des Français, V. 18.

§ Macbeth. IV. 3.

|| Hist. Cassinens. Præfat.

¶ Etymolog. Lib. IX. 3.

\*\* Phillips Deutsche Geschichte, I. 434.



Jeune, and many whom history but little extols, because they were not powerful as Henry VI. of England, and numerous others of the same type, some of whom, as Cedualla, King of the West Saxons, Cenfed, King of Mercia, Offa and Ina, died at Rome, whither they had gone through devotion.

If such were kingly graces, devotion was deemed no less essential in their ministers.

Legislative assemblies were not then opened with military parade, and with manifestation of hostile force, such as is used against a besieged fortress. Duchesne says that the members of the Parliament used to be seen going to the palace on their mules, praying to God, saying their hours and chaplets by the way.\*

See the rich nobles of Spain contending with the poor who should press nearest to the bier of St. John of God, as it was borne along through the streets of Grenada! The Marquises of Tarifa and Senalvo, Dom Pedro de Bovadiglia and Don Juan de Guevaro, four of the greatest nobles, thought it a singular favor that they were chosen to carry down his corpse from the room in which he died to the gate of the pavilion, where it was to lie in state.—When this humble man travelled, the greatest nobles used to vie with each other who should lodge him. As soon as he came to Valladolid, Mary de Mendoza, widow of the great commander, Francis de Los Cobos, employed her credit at the court, in order to prevent any one else from being allowed to entertain him, though nothing could prevent him from lodging in the hospital, and where there was no hospital, from preferring the houses of the poor to those of the rich.

Stephen the Wise, Count of Blois, after arriving at the Holy Land, was received with great honors by King Baldwin, who put all his treasures at his disposal. But nobles of these ages were not like our liberal peers; the Count refused every present except that of some relics, which he carried away with great devotion.†

In order to distinguish Thibaud V. Count of Blois, the great Senéchal, from his father, who was styled “the Saint,” the people gave him the epithet of “the Good.” There is extant an admirable letter written by this prince on the death of St. Thomas of Canterbury. He remitted to his subjects many of his rights, as is proved by a multitude of titles, and even by an inscription over one of the gates of Blois. His charities to the monks, to churches, and to hospitals, were also great.

He gave up all the dues of his sovereignty of Blois to the chapter of St. Saviour during the three days which followed the ascension.

Monstrellet remarks that Charles, Count of Blois, in the time of Louis XI. lived so holily during the last twenty years of his life, that he may be said to have spent them in fasting, prayer, and alms. He never sat down to table on Friday until he had washed the feet of thirteen poor persons, and served them at dinner with his own hands.

\* *Antiquit. de Paris*, I. 142.

† Bérnier, *Hist. de Blois*.

Charles of Blois, Duke of Brittany, in the fourteenth century, was another example of an heroic saint, who lived in the rank of a prince, as much detached from the world as if he had been in a cloister. Jacques de Henchain and Jean l'Argentier, his preceptors, had so well instructed him in the duties of a Christian, that nothing could check his ardor to sanctify his soul while a youth at the court of his father, Guy de Chastillon.\* Every day he used to recite the Psalter, the hours of our Lady, and those of the Cross; he used to serve every mass that was said in his father's palace, and assisted the poor in every way that he could. After he was married he continued his course of piety. He showed such respect to priests, that he would always alight from his horse whenever he met one on the country roads. He administered justice and prevented duels. He showed heroic patience in prison and amidst insults, and he closed his saintly life with an heroic death in the field, fighting through the sole desire of fulfilling his duty. This Charles de Blois, on being slain, was quickly despoiled by the varlets; and it was found then that he wore a hair shirt next his skin. A Franciscan brother, named Brother Raoul de Corgaignolles, came to the place, and being a very strong man, took up the body quite naked, and carried it on his shoulders for more than a league; then finding a cart, he placed it therein, and so conveyed it to Guinguant, where it was interred in the church of the Minor Friars. This Duke Charles had been in eighteen battles during his life; "*il fut le plus beau chevalier de France et le mieulx enteichié de vaillance; car de chevalerie faisoit ce qu'il appertenoit a prince. Jolys fut plus que nul aultre, toute sa vie, et de faire chansons et lays s'esbatoit souvent; mais sainte vie menoit secretement et maintient-on que en sa vie nostre seigneur faisoit pour luy maintz miracles.*"†

Armies seemed to feel a supernatural assistance when conducted by men of a devout and mystic character. Fernando Antolinez was performing his devotions while Count Garcias was giving battle to the Moors on the banks of the Douro, and the soldiers thought that an angel in his likeness was fighting for him. The same thing is related of the Emperor Ferdinand II. to whom, when at the foot of the altar, they brought standards and trophies, such as the mere valor of his predecessors had never gained.‡

Many of the spiritual letters of Father John D'Avilla, the celebrated preacher of Spain, are addressed to great nobles, and knights, and young men living in the world; and from the style in which they are written, one must form a high estimate of the piety of these persons. In fact, to be a Christian in the sense of the middle ages, required the devotion of a whole life to acquire the habits and graces, and even the information requisite: for what is above all striking and singular in their history is, the manner in which the principles of theologians were understood by the mass of the people, rendering so secure from revolution the base of the ecclesiastical and social state. Men were in a strict sense obedient to the intel-

\* Bernier, *Hist. de Blois*, 369. † *Chronique de Du Guesclin*, p. 145. ‡ *Savedra*, I. 184.

lectual order : they acted not from habit, but from an idea. In these latter days the people seem incapable of reducing to practice any idea of an abstruse and elevated class connected with the spiritual society, even when in theory they admit it. Only consider what a change must be wrought in the intelligence of such a people before they could be brought, like the population of Catholic ages, to venerate the Holy See as the centre of unity,—holy times, in the observance of festivals,—holy ceremonies, discerning their symbolic character,—holy things, obeying the authorities that might oppose their wishes,—holy persons, being full of zeal to serve saints and religious orders for the love of God !

The half brotherhoods of the Teutonic, Templar, and other orders, as also a number of religious associations and fraternities among the laity, served to extend the spirit of piety, and even the gravity of the cloister, in the world. The third order of St. Dominick, and that instituted by St. Francis, for people living in the world, were soon spread over Europe, and comprised kings and queens, princes and princesses, lords, knights, merchants, artisans, and laborers. The rule of the third order of St. Francis must have produced great effects in sanctifying the intercourse of social life. It particularly reminded the brethren and sisters to avoid the vices and follies which cause the misery and ruin of society, to refrain from worldly, vain, and calumnious conversation, to visit and relieve the poor and the sick, to assist them in the hospitals and prisons, and in their houses, to assist the dying, to keep secret the common faults of their neighbors, and to set an example of a pure and holy life, in courts, and camps, and great cities, and castles. By their rule, even persons living in the world were expected to assist at matins, in the churches of their respective parishes, during Lent.

To this order belonged the King St. Louis, St. Elzear, Count of Arian, and his wife, St. Delphine ; St. Ives, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Duchess of Thuringia ; St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal ; St. Brigitte, Princess of Sweden ; the blessed Conrad, nobleman of Plaisancia ; the blessed Isabella, sister of the King of St. Louis ; St. Clare of Monte Falco ; the Emperor Charles IV. and Elizabeth his wife ; the Empress Jane of the Greeks ; Bela IV. King of Hungary ; Charles II. King of Sicily ; Philip III. King of Spain ; Blanche of Castille, Queen of France ; James de Borgia, King of Jerusalem ; Beatrice, Countess of Rusconia ; Francis II. Duc de Bretagne ; Catherine, Duchess of Milan ; Prince Robert Malatesti, Sovereign of Rimini ; Prince Henry of Dacia ; Isabella Archduchess of the Netherlands, and sister of Philip III. of Spain ; Elizabeth de Bourbon, daughter of Henry IV. ; Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII. ; and Maria Theresa of Austria.

Few cloisters in Rome are more interesting than those of St. Isidore on the Pincian hill, along the walls of which are portraits of the illustrious persons who embraced this third order. There I remarked Brennus, King of Jerusalem ; John, King of Armenia ; Henry, King of Cyprus ; St. Louis, King of France ; James, King of Hungary and Sicily ; Peter, King of Arragon ; St. Elzear and Delphine ;



St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal ; St. Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Hungary ; James, eldest son of the King of Majorca ; and many others.

Moreover, the Church, by granting especial indulgence to those who should perform any one holy exercise observed in any religious order whatever, contributed no less to the same end. The year 1335 was remarkable for the extraordinary devotion connected with these fraternities, which moved the people of Italy and Provence, Spain and England. Processions of five, ten, or even twenty thousand persons, of both sexes, proceeded from city to city. They were enveloped in a white hood, which covered even the face, from which they derived the name of the white companies. They reposed in the cathedrals and public squares, crying out "Peace and mercy," beating themselves with rods of discipline, and chanting sacred hymns, particularly the "*Stabat Mater Dolorosa*," which was composed about this time. They were fed by the public, although they asked for nothing but bread and water. The pilgrimage lasted generally nine or ten days, after which they returned to their homes. The people of the towns which had been visited, kindled with the same fervor, proceeded in their turn ; and thus these devout processions extended from town to town. The first came into Italy by the coast of Genoa. At the sight of these pious pilgrims, the most obdurate hearts were melted : hatreds were forgotten, enemies reconciled, and all became sanctity and peace. The Lucchese, to the number of three thousand, visited Pistoia and Florence. The Pistoians came to the latter city in numbers about four thousand. Of the Florentines, forty thousand put on white ; and twenty thousand, with the Bishop of Fiesole at their head, went to Arezzo. These processions spread themselves throughout the whole of Italy.

Devout confraternities of laics, devoted to particular pious exercises and works of charity, existed every where. Of these there were, when Ughelli wrote, no fewer than forty-six in the city of Bologna ; thirty-five in Cremona ; twenty-four in Genoa ; one hundred in Naples ; eighteen in Ferrara ; twelve in Ravenna ; and similarly in other cities, in proportion to the magnitude of the state.

At Venice, where there were upwards of one hundred confraternities, six of these, termed great schools, were celebrated, in which were inscribed an innumerable multitude of laics, having attached to them noble churches, precious sacred vessels and vestments, besides immense funds, which were yearly expended in pious works, and in charity to the poor.\*

Chivalry was another institution of which the clergy took advantage, to infuse a spirit of devotion into the society of the world. To sanctify the profession of arms, which had the sanction of Christ, was an early project. A Latin prayer, of noble simplicity, was composed for the soldiers of the Roman army ; and Constantine prescribed that it should be daily repeated.

The high, affecting symbols, with which the institution of chivalry indicated the

\* Tom. VI.

essential duties of its members, are an evidence of the purest conceptions of a Christian life. Witness that bath of honor, courtesy, and goodness, that bed of repose, to signify the rest of Paradise, which we should conquer by our knight-hood ; that white robe, to signify the purity which we should preserve if we would arrive at God ; that red garment, to signify that we should be always ready to shed our blood to defend the holy Church of God ; those sandals of black cloth, to remind us of death, and of the earth in which we shall lie stretched, whence we came, and to which we must return.\*

Every part of the knight's armor had its moral signification. The gauntlets, in using which he lifted up his hands on high, were to remind him of prayer to God, and that he was not to be guilty of putting his hand to a false oath. "The ordination of priests," says a modern writer, "to which the admission to knight-hood has been frequently compared, could not be accompanied with more solemn exhortations to devotion and purity of mind. Even the desire of glory was not allowed to be a worthy motive for seeking the order of knighthood, unless meekly subjected to the wish of honoring God."

This was the spirit of the military character in Catholic times. It breathes through all the acts of a Tancred, a Roger, a Chandos, a Joinville, a Gonsalva of Cordova, a Don Antonio de Leïva, a Don Fernando of Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, a Don Alonso of Avalos, Marquis of Basto, an Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, an Alfonso of Albuquerque, a Count of Fuentes, a Marquis of Spinola, and numberless others, that we meet with in the old English, French, and Spanish chronicles. The spirit of St. Paul became the spirit of warlike heroes—for it was the essence of chivalry to glory in the cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

True, there may have been something to purge away in the deeds of romantic devotion, which illuminate the page of knightly books. Yet methinks the gravest hermit would only smile at the recollection of Fernando Perez del Pulgar, and of what he performed at the siege of Grenada, when with fifteen companions, between stealth and force, he penetrated in the dead of night into the city, leaving his company to maintain the skirmish with the surprised soldiers at the gate, and galloping through the streets till he reached the principal mosque, where he alighted, and on his knees took possession of it as a Christian Church ; in testimony of which act, he nailed to the door, with his dagger, a tablet, which he had brought with him, on which was inscribed, in large letters, "Ave Maria ;"—after which he effected his escape through crowds of soldiers, to whom the alarm had been given, rejoined his companions, who were still fighting at the gate, and with them returned in safety to the camp. The mosque, thus boldly sanctified, was eventually, on the capture of Grenada, converted into a cathedral ; and in commemoration of this exploit, Fernando del Pulgar enjoyed the right of sepulture in that church, and the privilege of sitting in the choir during high mass. Like

\* L'Ordène de Chevalerie.

many other knights, he was a man of learning as well as a warrior, and inscribed to Charles V. a summary of the achievements of Gonsalvo of Cordova, surnamed the Great Captain, who had been one of his comrades in arms.

As every thing was required to pay tribute to religion, the very titles of the orders of knighthood were connected with the memory of a saint, or of some devout mystery. Witness the Order of the Star, founded by King John of France in the year 1351. The knights, five hundred in number, used to assemble every year at St. Ouen, between Paris and St. Denis, in a castle called the Noble House, on the festival of the Epiphany and on that of the Assumption, at the hour of prime; and they were required to remain there till after vespers the following day. Here there was a hall, sixty feet wide and one hundred and twenty long, flanked with four round towers at each corner, and having a vast chimney, which was as high as the church steeple. In this hall each knight had his arms painted over his seat. The knights were enjoined to wear the habit, and to fast on Saturdays, also to give fifteen deniers to the poor. On the death of a knight, his ring and decoration were to be sent to the castle, that the rest might pray for him.\*

The peculiarly religious character of the middle ages may be witnessed also in the form of those benedictions, the best of natal gifts, as Æschylus would have called them, given to the sons of great men—as that cited by Mabillon, which had been pronounced after the baptism of Lewis, son of the Duke of Angers, in the year 1377. In these formulas, the language is always characteristic of the supernatural views of life with which men's minds were then imbued; and so great was the importance attached to them that when St. Colomban, the courageous missionary, who reformed kings and people, refused to bless the sons of Theodoric, he was banished from Luxeuil and from Ostrasia, and obliged to take refuge with Clothaire II.†

In the benediction published by Mabillon, God is invoked to bestow his blessing on the child, that as Jacob before his birth was loved without any merits of his own, so he may live guarded by holy angels in the sight of the Lord,—that he may be delivered from all calamities, as was Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans; that in him the Lord God may be praised, and his holy name blessed; that his birth may be useful to the whole world, and to the kingdom of the Franks; that his service may be received as that of Samuel, and that he may have grace to preserve his people in tranquillity; that, like his ancestors, he may be filled with spiritual gifts, and that his age may tend to the exaltation of Christianity; that the Holy Spirit may be vouchsafed to him as to Daniel, that he may know the judgments of God, and that he may fulfil what he knows; that he may be a school of virtues, a master of life, a mirror of modesty, and an example of all Christianity, being grateful in prosperous and patient in adverse fortune; so

† Lebeuf, III.

† Michelet, *Hist. de France*, I. 247.



that, being guarded within and without by the Lord, he may, after a long life and a blessed death, arrive at God his Creator, to reign with him for ever.\*—Such was the *γενέθλιον δόσιν* of the middle ages.

But to proceed with the characters described in history. Baldwin the Pious, Count of Flanders, was nourished when a boy in the court of the Emperor Henry, and in that palace he was loved by all. In this time of his youth he was seized with so great a sickness, that his father held a candle within his hand, expecting that his spirit would depart—when lo ! suddenly his strength reviving, he said aloud, “Father, I shall escape from this sickness if you will give me a place at Hannon, where I may build a monastery.” The father was not slow in promising, and his son recovered. Accordingly the monastery was built there in honor of the holy apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul ; and from this circumstance, Baldwin of Hannon was called Baldwin the Pious, because he was wholly given up to works of piety—a lover and defender of orphans and widows, of the churches, and of the poor and oppressed. In the church he used always to pay the greatest attention to what was said ; and during the Psalmody he would never speak, unless to God. At mass he would always have some poor people near him, to whom he gave alms, that they might pray for him and with him. In time of scarcity he used to be most bountiful, and to cause the monasteries to dispense largely. He was completely devoted to piety, and he used also to be called Baldwin with the nest, and he used to be painted with a bird’s nest on his fist, holding it in sign of peace, because, during all his time, Flanders enjoyed peace :—no arms were borne, no troubles endured ; the plough was not withdrawn from the land, and scarcely were the doors closed during the night. He died in the year 1070, and was buried in the monastery which he had founded.†

We read of St. Leopold, Marquis of Austria, in the year 1096, and of his wife Agnes, daughter of the Emperor, Henry IV. that they two used to read the holy Scriptures together, and that they founded a monastery and Chapter near Vienna, because the care of eighteen children did not allow them sufficient time for the pious exercises that they loved. This saintly prince was also an heroic warrior, for he defended his country twice against the invasion of the Hungarians ; and he terminated a glorious reign by a holy death in the year 1136.

In fact, many of the princes and nobles of the middle ages were a kind of lay bishops, ever contriving how they might best serve religion and exalt the Catholic Church, the type of which character may be witnessed in that Renaud de Montauban, who carried stones on his back to help in the building of the cathedral of Cologne. The Count de la Motte, writing to the Count de la Tour Maubourg respecting the success which attended the mission of St. Francis Regis, ends his letter with these words :—“In short, I regard this mission as one of the

\* *Vetera Analecta*, 485.

† *Chronicon S. Bertini*, cap. 38. Pars II. apud Martene *Thesaur. Anecdotorum*, Tom. III.

most signal benefits which I have ever received from the liberal hand of God.”\*

Duke Theodo, in the seventh century, with submissive prayers, besought the blessed Rupert to illuminate Bavaria, by visiting it with sacred doctrine: † and Virgilius, the holy priest from Ireland, who built the great church of St. Rupert at Salzburg, in the eighth century, had another layman, Duke Otilo, for the promoter and protector of his apostolic mission to convert the Bavarians and the natives of Carinthia.‡ What is more remarkable, it was this zeal for religion which mingled with all the thoughts of Columbus:—“He looked upon himself,” says his biographer, “as standing in the hand of Heaven, chosen from among men for the accomplishment of its high purpose; he read, as he supposed, his contemplated discovery foretold in Holy Writ, and shadowed forth darkly in the prophecies. The ends of the earth were to be brought together, and all nations, and tongues, and languages, united under the banners of the Redeemer.”

Proofs of the religious zeal of the middle ages confront us at every step in the walks of our ancient history, as well as in the songs of our old poets: and, indeed, the adversaries of Rome are always willing to attest it. “As for the Papist,” says Fuller, speaking of the Catholic gentry of England, “he can as soon not be, as not be active.”§

What St. Adelbert said of the King of Denmark, who impeded his efforts to convert the northern nations, “*quibus mens prior est ad pensiones vectigalium quam ad conversionem gentilium*,” could never have been applied to the great Catholic princes of those times. The Emperor Ferdinand II. used to say that he would rather renounce his kingdom, than neglect any occasion of extending the faith; that he would prefer being banished, with his wife and children, having no other arms but a staff in his hand, being condemned to live on bread and water, than to suffer any injury to be done to God; and that he prayed to God that, if by his death he could advance the Catholic religion, he might be willing to have his head cut off: and he gave repeated warning to his successor, Ferdinand III., that he should endeavor to defend and preserve the true apostolical Roman and Catholic faith in all his dominions.

“Often have we wished to hold with you a familiar conversation on what concerns the utility of the holy Church of God.” It is thus that Charlemagne writes to Odilbert, the Archbishop of Milan: || and we find the Archbishop Leidrad writing to the same emperor, in reply to his questions respecting the mysteries of faith. ¶ “I know indeed,” says Claudius, Bishop of Tours, to the Emperor Lewis the Pious, “that your serenity is always intent on holy works and on sacred reading, so that I doubt not that you lead a theoretic life under the imperial diadem.”

On the death of Pope Gregory VII. when the heretics and schismatics, like wolves, sought to invade the Roman Church, Desiderius, the Abbot of Monte

\* Vie de S. F. Regis.

† Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 37.

‡ Id. II. 82.

§ Thoughts, 269.

|| Mabilonii Vetera Analecta, 75, 76.

¶ Id. 85.

Casino, with the bishops and cardinals, and also, adds Leo of Ostia, "the religious laymen who faithfully persevered in Catholic unity and obedience, began to act unanimously, and to provide for the due ordination of his successor."\*

Kings regarded it as their glory to co-operate with bishops and holy men in promoting the spiritual welfare of their subjects. Witness the following words, pronounced in the year 742:—"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, Caroloman, duke and prince of the Franes, with the council of the servants of God and of my nobles, the bishops who are in my kingdom, with the priests, assembled in council and synod for the fear of Christ, that they might give council to me in what manner the law of God and ecclesiastical religion may be restored, which have been dissipated in the days of the princes my predecessors, and how the Christian people may be brought to the salvation of their souls, and may be prevented from perishing, we ordain as follows." The object of the decree is to preserve the bishops and priests from being molested and impeded in their ministry by military operations.

Still more remarkable was the language of the Capitulary, in the year 830:—"Since it hath pleased Divine Providence to constitute our mediocrity to this office, what we have chiefly to desire above all things, is that, by God's assistance, we may defend the holy Church and its servants, and that peace and justice may be preserved generally amongst all our people."

"Although," says the Emperor Albert, "our soul, amidst various and innumerable cares, is distracted by daily solicitude for the welfare of our subjects, there is one object above all, which engages it: namely, how we can protect the liberties of the venerable churches and ecclesiastical persons; how we may nourish them either by new donations, or by renovating ancient, according to the circumstances of the time."†

The words of William II., king of Sicily, in a diploma of the year 1157, were as follows:—"Kings and princes of the nations reign justly, if they understand that they are themselves subject to the highest Prince, by whom kings reign and exercise justice; nor do we think that we can in any manner administer rightly the reigns of the kingdom committed to us by Heaven, unless we study to magnify and exalt, by all means of religion, the sacrosanct Church, which is the mother of faith."‡ Again, says this great prince, in another act of the date of 1177, "The chief business of a king is to attend to the interest of the churches, where is placed the foundation of safety and of the Christian faith; neither is there any thing in the prince more glorious than to provide for the augmentation of the things of the Church, and for the maintenance of its inviolable peace, 'quorum cultui deservire nihil est aliud quam regnare, et Ecclesias Christi protegere nihil est aliud quam Christum in Ecclesiis venerari.' "§

\* Chronic. Casinensis, Lib. III. 65.

† Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 718.

‡ Sicilia Sacra, I. 97.

§ Id. I. 107.



Hence we may remark that, with respect to the peace and safety of the churches, and indeed of the whole state, it was not in the middle ages as with the fate of those spoken of by Apollo, whose destiny depended upon the absence or presence of one suffrage:—

*Γνώμης δ' ἀπούσης πῆμα γίγνεται μέγα.  
Βαλοῦσά τ' οἶκον ψῆφος ὤρθωσεν μία.\**

The ecclesiastical and social order, with the ideas attached to both,—the Christianity of a state, for which there was no word until after the time of Charlemagne, when that term was introduced†—rested upon inviolable foundations, upon certain general principles with which all governments were imbued, and which insured them from being left unprotected by the ruling power. Thus Dagobert proclaims that “the royal dignity strengthens the foundation of its structure when it listens to the petitions of priests and pontiffs, and gives them effect in the name of God.”‡ Theoderic observes, that “the royal elevation ought always to provide that whatever had been done contrary to the decree of God or to the institutions of the Fathers, should be annulled.”§ And Charlemagne says, “If we lend a willing ear to the prayers of priests and servants of God, and bear assistance to the discharge of their ministry, this, without doubt, will conduce to strengthen the state of our kingdom, and to the attainment also of the beatitude of eternal life.”|| Childebert speaks to the same effect:—“It becomes the clemency of the prince to obey the just petitions of priests, and to give them effect in God’s name:¶ and if we preserve the works of our Fathers, we trust that our own will have eternal stability.” The emperor Lewis also says,—“If we bestow opportune benefits on those who inhabit places emancipated for the love of God, and set apart for divine worship, we doubt not but that a recompense of eternal remuneration will be made to us by the Lord;” \*\* and in his diploma to the Church of Modena, he says,—“By attending to the petitions of priests and servants of God to the augmentation of the divine worship, we confidently believe that we shall not only add to the stability of our kingdom, but also enable ourselves to attain more easily to eternal rewards.”††

In the year 930, King Hugo says, in his donation to Sigifred, bishop of Parma, “We believe that nothing can tend more to the honor of our exalted rank, or to the strength of our government, than our having solicitude for defending the property of the holy church of God, and our lending pious ears to the vows of the faithful.”‡‡ The Emperor Otho III. holds the same language:—“It behoves us who, by the divine gift, are given pre-eminence over other men, to obey in all things the precepts of God, to protect the places dedicated to him by the petitions of our faithful people, and to guard them by the imperial favor;

\* Æschyl. Eumenid. 750.

† Ughelli Ital. Sac. I. 409.

‡ Mabilonii Vet. Analecta, 282.

§ Id. 277.

|| Id. 294.

¶ Id. 283.

\*\* Mabil. Vet. Analecta, 355.

†† Italia Sacra, Tom. I. 95.

‡‡ Italia Sacra, I. 156.

since we believe that such actions will conduce both to the prosperous passage of this mortal life, and to our obtaining hereafter eternal felicity." \*

In fine, such was the force of this traditionary wisdom, that we find even an Emperor, Henry IV., saying, "As our predecessors, whether kings or emperors, are in this greatly to be praised, that places dedicated to the divine worship were instituted by them with a pious intention, so we believe that we also ourselves shall not be without praise or divine remuneration, if we protect the same ecclesiastical peace, and confirm with solicitude the same primitive liberty." †

"Whoever looks closely at the history of our France," says Pasquier, "will see that it is not without great reason our kings have borne the title of 'Very Christian,' for each race has just ground to claim it; the first, for having renounced paganism, in which it was nourished, and for having never degenerated into the Arian heresy, which infected so many of the nations that attacked the empire; the second, for having advocated the popedom in France; and the third, for its services in the crusades, and in protecting the great and holy orders of religion, which brought infinite fruit to Christianity by their saintly exhortations." ‡

In a heathen land, the princes and nobles of former times did not confine their speculations to projects of trade or to questions of human vanity; but their curiosity resembled that of Tasso's knight, Ubaldo,—

" 'But will our gracious God,' the knight reply'd,  
 'That with his blood all sinful men hath bought,  
 His Truth for ever and his Gospel hide  
 From all these lands, as yet unknown, unsought.' " §

They felt no guilty shame at being thought soldiers of Christ. It is the highest expression of praise with the writers of the middle age to say that a person was "greatly Catholic." The phrase of "ultra Catholic," used in reproach by a modern writer, would have seemed very strange to them. "*Querelam Ecclesiæ quilibet Catholicus facit suam*," was the maxim of these times, when every man would have thought it an honorable boast to say with Theonæ,

*ἐγὼ πέφυκά τ' εὐσεβεῖν καὶ βούλομαι.* ||

Truly if we consider with Bellarmin how hardly there can be found a more general or less curable disease than human fear, how it rises, grows up, and remains with us till death, how children lie, through fear of confusion or shame, how men perjure themselves, to retain reputation, how it is this fear which makes them refuse to forgive injuries, and renounce luxury and expenses, and profusion, † this deliverance from the fear of man by means of the fear of God, which so remarkably characterized the middle ages, will seem entitled to all our admiration.

Behold the Paladins in Ariosto when they recognize Rogero,—

\* Mabilonii Vet. Analecta, 449,

† Id. 450.

‡ Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 19.

§ XV. 39. || Eurip. Helen.

¶ De Gemitu Columbæ. Lib. III. 2.

" All, for they know he is a Christian, stand  
 About him with serene and joyful face :  
 All press upon the knight ; one grasps his hand,  
 Another locks him fast in his embrace."

This is the spirit which still animates the Catholic population of Spain and Italy. Wandering through the vineyards in the neighborhood of Rome, a stranger, whose looks proclaim him to be of English race, will be often questioned respecting the multitude of fervent Catholics in distant Ireland, that lies, he will be reminded, so far beyond the ocean stream.

Zeal for religion was a motive in kings which the laity respected, and in consideration of which they would tolerate much that might have displeased them in the conduct of rival states. At the great assembly of Gisors, in the year 1186, when, on the day of St. Agnes, the knights of France and England under Philippe-Auguste and Henry, received the venerable William of Tyre, who came with bulls from the Pope, and with words of pathetic eloquence, to move them to undertake the deliverance of Jerusalem, the Archbishop had no sooner concluded his speech than a general cry was heard of "The Cross! The Cross!" Henry being the first to throw himself on his knees before the legate, to solicit the pilgrim's sign, the barons of France began to murmur that he should have taken precedence of their sovereign: "Ah, ah," they cried, "the colors of the Plantagenets advanced before those of France!" But they were immediately appeased, when it became manifest that Henry was solely actuated by a zeal for Jesus Christ, and for the help of the holy sepulchre. Strange contrast to the character of their posterity! with whom there needs no other cause of execration against a government than the fact of being pure from sacrilege!

The truth is, that the vivacity of faith, from which zeal is inseparable, is attached to those exercises of piety which were so general during the middle ages. As Novalis says, "To pray is in religion, what to think is in philosophy; to pray, is to exercise religion;" and we have already seen how the inducements and facilities to acquire the spirit of prayer were supplied in abundance by the Catholic Church. Moreover we must bear in mind the effect of those numerous minute practices of devotion recommended by her authority, which were generally observed, in both high and humble life, with a confidence that derived perhaps not a little force from the influence of honor in religion. Tasso, in his letter to the Duke of Ferrara, the original of which may be seen in the library of that city, begins with making a cross. The sign manual of Atenulfus, count of Capua and prince of Beneventum, in the year 903, as also that of Pandolfus and Landolphus, Richard and Jordon, prince of Capua in the eleventh century, which existed in the archives of the monastery of Monte Casino, exhibit a Latin cross at the four extremities, as also along the lines of which are placed the principal letters of the name.\* The signature attached to the diploma of the

\*Hist. Cassinens, Sæc. III.



Countess Matilda, in the archives of the monastery of Nonantula, presented the letters of her name grouped in the four angles of a cross ; \* and the signature of Charlemagne, in his diploma to the church of Beneventum, where it was found by Guicciardini consists in the seven letters at the points of the cross.†

All these customs had been transmitted from the first ages, as appears from Tertullian,‡ Justin Martyr,§ St. Chrysostom,|| and St. Ambrose. “Rising in the morning,” says the latter, “we ought to give thanks to Christ for our preservation, and we ought to perform every work of the day with the sign of the Saviour. When you were Gentiles, used you not to seek for signs, and to collect the signs by which things would be prosperous? I do not wish you now to err in numbers, for I know that in the one sign of Christ there is safe prosperity of all things. He who begins to sow with this sign, will reap the fruit of eternal life; he who sets out on a journey with this sign, will arrive in heaven.”¶ Traces, indeed, of a false shame respecting these things, in primitive times, may be discovered in the writings of the Fathers, who condemn it. “Let us not be ashamed,” says St. Cyril, “to confess him who was crucified. Let the *σφραγίς* be confidently made upon the forehead with the finger.” But the complaint of a modern author respecting the shame evinced by his contemporaries in making the sign of the cross when they stand for the “Benedicite” at table, would not have been justified in the days of feudal magnificence and chivalrous refinement. Had these practices no other use besides that of accustoming the mind to confess before men that it professed the humility of the cross, they would have been deemed of inestimable importance by the spiritual thinkers of the middle ages. For when is it, say they, that men are most in danger of denying Christ? It is on small, not great occasions: it is when some one will surprise them with questions. Why such a change? It will be near the fire, in an idle conversation, during a pleasant walk: it will be in the presence of a stranger, or even of their own servant.

Besides, the observance of these minute practices, of which we may say, in the words of St. Jerome, “Non sunt contemnenda quasi parva, sine quibus magna constare non possunt,” we find that the laity, during the middle ages, were assiduous in practising all the important exercises of a spiritual life. In the time of Charlemagne, all persons were expected to receive the communion every Sunday, unless especially prevented.\*\* By the canons of the Council of Autun, in the year 670, no layman was to be counted as a Catholic, who did not receive the communion at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, at which three festivals, all had been required to receive it by the Council of Agatha in the year 506. “No one, excepting in case of public penance, neglecting communion on these three festivals, should be considered a Christian,” says the Pastoral Epistle of Wulfad

\* Italia Sacra, I. 170. † Id. Tom. VIII. 37. ‡ De Coron. Mil. 3. § Apolog. I. 82.

|| Op. T. I. p. 571. ¶ S. Ambrosii, Sermon. XLIII.

\*\* Thomassinus de Vetere et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. c. 14.

Bituricensis.\* It was even the custom for the laity to make spiritual retreats before the principal festivals of the Church. Thus we find Romuald, a young nobleman at Ravenna, withdrawing to the neighboring monastery of Classe, for the sake of penance. Every year, Boniface, Marquis of Tuscany, used to visit the celebrated monastery of Pomposa, and there make solemn confession and penitence for his sins, sometimes publicly submitting to the discipline.

In a former book, we had occasion to observe how holy was the spirit that pervaded schools and colleges: but here the mystery of the phenomenon is explained, when we find that paternal towers and domestic hearths were also holy. What is commonly called education is but of little effect, in comparison with the constant and universal action of society. In vain do hypocritical parents separate and isolate children in colleges, or surround them with a sanitary cord, if the air which they themselves breathe is corrupt and unholy; for their children must necessarily breathe it too, when they come in contact with society. Among the laity of the middle ages, it was common to meet with men, like the noble Hilary of Aquitaine, when in the married state, endowed with the graces of a profound religious spirit. The chronicle of the Abbey of St. Trudo relating how the Countess Heresinda, continually devoted to pious works, and advancing from day to day in holy conversation, constantly frequenting the Church of the blessed Michael the Archangel, laying aside her flesh, was buried there, proceeds to mention that, after her death, the noble Count Eilbert, meditating the Divine law by day and night, going round to visit the precious churches, and consoling those that administered in them, disposed himself to adhere to God with all the affections of his mind; but the multitude of his neighbors rose upon him, and declared that he must leave them an heir. And, therefore, in compliance with their desire, he was a second time married. And so he lived, adhering to Divine meditations, and suffering no temporal impediment of frail and passing honor to shake his good resolution. And then he prepared his tomb in the Church of Vazor: nor was the oil of his lamp ever extinguished; nor were his senses disturbed either by losses or flattery; but the residue of his days was spent in holy conversation, and in contending against the snares of the enemy. So, when the judge knocked, and the Lord announced his coming, he was not found asleep, but watching and expecting his Creator. Thus his soul passed to Christ in the year 980.\*

We read in another chronicle, which at least shows the color of the age in which it was written, that St. Patrick inquired of the Prince Conallus whether he would assume the habit of a monk? and the prince replied, that his heart was prepared to do whatever the saint should command; and that then the saint replied, "For the sign of power and protection, and for the proof of thy spiritual worth, shalt thou bear thy shield and sceptre; the name of laic shalt thou show, but the mind and the merit of a monk shalt thou possess."

\* Mabilonii Vetera Analecta, 102.

† Chronic. Abbattæ S. Trudonis, Lib. I. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. VII.

Mabillon gives many examples of kings and princes, who were refrained by holy men from entering into monasteries, on the ground of their presence being essential to the order of society. During many ages, the abbots of monasteries had no greater concern than to prevent kings and dukes from abandoning the government of their states to seek tranquillity in the cloister. William I. Duke of Normandy, would have left every thing, to retire to Jumièges, if the Abbot Mainard would have permitted him. Hugues I., Duke of Burgundy, was only prevented by the Pope's interposition from becoming a monk. The Emperor Henry II., entering the church of the Abbey of St. Vanne, at Verdun, exclaimed, "*Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi: hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam.*" A monk overheard him, and warned the Abbot Richard, who called the emperor into the chapter room, and asked him what was his intention? "I wish," said he, weeping, "to renounce the secular habit, to put on yours, and henceforth to serve only God with your brethren." "Will you then promise," replied the abbot, "according to our rule and example of Jesus Christ, obedience unto death." "I promise it," answered the emperor. "Well then, I receive you as a monk: from this day I take charge of your soul, and what I command you, do you perform in the fear of the Lord. Now, I order you to return to the government of the empire which God has entrusted to you, and to watch with all your power, with fear and trembling, for the safety of the whole kingdom." The emperor, bound by his vow, obeyed; but, in fact, in heart he had been long a monk, as he continued to be to the end of his days.

Many noble persons were devoted to monasteries, while they retained the secular habit. They were called "Donati," and "Donatæ."\* Though, in the close of life, many of these men withdrew altogether from the secular cares, they had still continued in it sufficiently long to be considered as having belonged to it, and, therefore, as being examples of the characters in question. Two Doges of Venice shone in sanctity upon the ducal throne, as well as in miracles after their death. It was not till after a glorious reign, that Petrus Urseolus, the twenty-second duke, retired into a monastery of Aquitaine, where he died, in the year 976: and Aureus Marepertus, the thirty-ninth duke, had fought in the holy war, and had conquered Saladin, and had governed the republic in wisdom and justice during fifteen years, when he chose to abdicate, and retire into a religious house, there to spend the rest of his days in holy meditations.† St. Theresa describes the character of her uncle, who constrained her, as she travelled, to pass some days in his house. "Our Lord, indeed," she relates, "went on disposing him for his own service, so that, when he grew more into years, he left the world, and became a religious man, and ended his life in such sort, that I believe," she adds, "he now enjoys the vision of God;" but she represents him "as being at that time, while still in the secular state, a very discreet man, and of great virtue, whose usual

\* Præfat VI. Sæcul. § 5.

† Italia Sacra, V. 1166.



exercise was to read good books in the Spanish tongue ; and whose discourse was most commonly of God and of the vanity of the world."

Gobertus, the pious and venerable monk of Villers, had been long a Lord and Count of Asperimont, being born of noble and rich parents of Lotharingia. His father Gaufrey had two sons, of whom the eldest was John, and the other Gobertus. They were both handsome boys, elegant and robust amongst all the companions of their youth. On a certain day, the father regarding his sons, and diligently reflecting, determined that his youngest son, Gobertus, was more adapted for temporal warfare and for the manners of the world, and accordingly he made him the heir of all his possessions ; but his brother John, as less fitted for a military life, he made a clerk, who afterwards became bishop of Metz.

It happened, after some time, that while Gobertus, the knight, was idling away his years in worldly warfare, and had made for himself a name renowned amongst all his contemporaries, he took it in heart to consider that the fame of worldly glory could not be perpetuated in heaven. Therefore, he began to fear God, and to venerate ecclesiastical persons, and to embrace with great desire the blessed Mary, Mother of God, and, beneath the rust of mundane chivalry, to be so devout that he might almost be thought to have attained to perfection, if it were lawful to say so. From that time, he never despised the judgments of the law, but began to avoid all subjects of wickedness ; he injured not his neighbor, but he stretched out his hand to the poor ; he relieved the oppressed, and constantly endeavored, in every work of piety, to render God propitious to him. On a certain occasion, he was inspired with zeal to vindicate the land of Jerusalem from the infidels, to destroy the worship of idols, and to give extension to the Divine worship as far as he was able. This was at the time when Frederick II., the wicked emperor, who was a concealed infidel, as was afterwards clearly shown, proposed to go to the Holy Land, that his iniquity might be veiled with a false semblance of good. By prayers and promises, he persuaded Gobertus to join his expedition, and assumed him as his fellow-soldier ; but the man of God discovering his perfidy, turned from him, and having fulfilled his vow with great devotion, he repassed the sea, and returned home. After his return, he did not recede from his good resolutions, like those who believe only for a time, but he firmly adhered to God. He had learned on his pilgrimage to sing the hours of the blessed Virgin Mary : his heart was always fixed on God. It often happened that, going before day to assist at matins, he did not dare to go unarmed, through fear of his enemies ; and yet he chose rather to hasten to the worship of God, than to pass those hours without fear, luxuriously resting on his bed. Thus, before day, he used often to go armed to the Divine office : being thus armed against the visible and invisible enemy. Moreover, the pious soldier of Christ, wishing to turn to advantage the fruit of his warfare, went to St. James, at Compostella ; but at the first hour every morning, he sought the church, where he saw and heard the celebration of the Divine office of the holy Eucharist, that his soul might daily be

sustained by our Lord's body. Thus did the soldier of Christ proceed, going and returning, so that he seemed to fulfil what is written, "Tbunt sancti de virtute in virtutem, donec videant Deum deorum in Sion."\*

A general feature of the devotion of the laity in the middle ages consisted in that religious and philosophical turn of their conversation and writing, which so clearly discovered what lay uppermost in the heart. Modern times, which can produce a De Maistre, a Bonald, a Chateaubriand, a Stolberg, a Frederick Schlegel, a Manzoni, and a Pellico, may seem, in this respect, to fear no contrast; but it is not so much the genius of a few great men devoted to religion, among the laity, which is so remarkable in the annals of former ages, as the prevalence of a religious philosophy among that class of society, and the readiness of all men to take part in beautiful disputation respecting the future life. "Non ad solos sacerdotes Ecclesiæ pertinet status: cunctis fidelibus sollicitudo ista communis est." This is what St. Avitus says, in his letter to the illustrious man, Senarius.† Accordingly, we find a Gundobadus, King of the Burgundians, whose evil belief diminishes not the force of the example, writing to this holy archbishop, to ask the meaning of certain prophecies in Isaiah and in the Book of Kings, and this saint, holding a correspondence with him on various abstruse questions of theology.

Prosper and Hilary were the zealous defenders of the Catholic doctrine against the Pelagians of Marseilles; yet Prosper was neither priest nor clerk: Victorius Aquitanus only calls him "vir venerabilis;" and Pope Gelasius only "vir religiosus;" and Gennade only says, "homo Aquitanicæ regionis." Thus, though a simple laic, he meddled with theology and doctrine, and, in union with Hilary, not only wrote, but also went to Rome to provide against the danger. St. Victor, a soldier, when in the prison of Marseilles, converted his three guards; and there can be no doubt that, in early times, the knowledge of the Gospel was propagated widely by the Roman soldiers, especially in Pannonia, by the armies of Trajan and Aurelius.‡ This spirit continued to prevail during the middle ages, so that similar examples could be multiplied from their heroic annals.

Celebrated was the history of the Sultan, who sent his daughter to persuade three knights of Laon, who were in prison, to abjure the Christian faith. They, on the contrary, converted her; and on their escape and return, founded in 1141, the church of our Lady of Liesse, three leagues from Laon.

Antony Galvan, a Portuguese, one of the most illustrious warriors of his age, and as renowned in history for his piety as for his valor, being governor of one of the Molucca Islands, having no priest to send as a missionary, to instruct the natives of Macazar, who were desirous of embracing Christianity, in consequence of the example of two of their fellow-countrymen who had been converted by this gov-

\* Hist. Monast. Villariensis, Lib. II. cap. II. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. Tom. III.

† S. Aviti Epist. Tom. XXXVI.

‡ Germania Sacra, I.

ernor, sent as a catechist, a soldier, named Francis de Castro, who, being prevented from arriving there by a tempest, occasion was furnished to another layman to exercise this office of religion; for Antonio Payva, a Portuguese merchant, having landed there to take in a load of sandal-wood, the King of Supa came to converse with him on the subject of the Christian religion; and this good merchant was able to speak so much to the purpose, that the king was converted, and all his court, being baptized by Payva, who was now despatched by them with a charge to send priests to that country. This happened shortly before the visit of St. Francis Xavier to Macazar.

St.. Odo says, that Count Gerald, when a young man, surpassed many clerks in his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.\* This was no uncommon accomplishment in the laity of the middle ages. King Alphonso of Naples and Arragon, who used to read Cæsar and Livy every day, and who translated the Epistles of Seneca into Spanish, had read, with the utmost care, the whole Bible, with commentaries, fourteen times, from beginning to end.†

In the life of the Count of Rosenberg, it is said that he had been accustomed from his earliest years to read the Holy Scriptures; so that his heart was for ever after impressed with a sense of their Divine purport, and that the world was never able to efface the knowledge and love of the truths of the Gospel. Antoine du Faix, in his book of instructions, entitled, "*L'Esperon de Discipline*," composed for Charles, Duke of Savoy, in recommending books, advises him, above all, to become well versed in the New Testament, that he may be on his guard against the heretics of the age. The Abbé Gouget observes that this author had a profound knowledge of human nature, and that his idea of education was admirable. We find the Constable de Clisson, in his last will, bequeathing to the Dame de Rochefort, a little cross of pearls, and his Bible in French.‡ We read of Mathieu son of Burchard V., Seigneur de Montmorency, in the reign of Philippe Augustus, that he had been brought up in all the arts of chivalry in the castle of Colombe; and that the monks of the Abbey of Laval, which had been endowed by the first barons of Montmorency, had instructed him in the science of the Holy Scriptures: and Mabillon relates that the heroic Duc de Montausier had read the New Testament one hundred and thirteen times.§

In fact, the laity of the middle ages, like the first Christians, might have been named disciples, which term applies to men who occupy themselves in studying the doctrines of salvation, sitting at the apostolic feet. The sentences of St. Jerome and St. Augustin were then as familiar to chivalrous ears, as those of the classic orators and poets to the modern scholar. Venerable tradition was widely disseminated; kings and barons would have homilies of the holy Fathers read aloud at their tables both morning and evening; and so general were the effects,

\* De Vita Geraldii Bibliothec. Cluniacensis, 69. † Drexelius, de Conformit. Lib. III. c. 2.

‡ Vie des Grands Capitaines Française du Moyen Age, IV. 200.

§ De Studiis Monast. Pars, III. c. 2.



that theologians, proving the impossibility of introducing secretly any new doctrine into the Church, show the astonishment and opposition which would have been instantly made, not only by the clergy and the religious order, but also by the laity, who were no less conspicuous in piety and in knowledge of their religion.\* The language of the clergy was therefore that of the Paschal Sermon of Richard of St. Victor. "Christ our pasch is immolated. Brethren, you know the Scriptures and their virtue : therefore our sermon to you will not be doctrine, but admonition, and the recalling to your memory of known things. From the fountain whence I drink, drink also ye. Where I draw, you draw: if I draw water in joy from the fountains of the Saviour, you also draw there. Judge therefore as spiritual, whether the water which I present to you flows from the midst of the fountain—whether it is drawn from the fountains of the Saviour. Christ our pasch is immolated."†

Peter, Abbot of Moustier-la-Celle, in the year 1154, dedicated his book, entitled *De Disciplina Claustrali*, to Henry the Liberal, Count of Champagne, by whom he was greatly loved.‡

Dom Carlos de Tapia, Marquis de Belmonte, composed a treatise on religion, which was much esteemed in Spain. The Emperor Charles V. who had often wished to raise Louis of Blois to the highest dignities, had such an admiration for his writings, that he used to carry his ascetical books with him wherever he went, and they constituted his ordinary reading when in his retreat at St. Just.

It was the same in the first ages. Marius Victorinus Afer, a consular man, wrote four books against the Arians, which merited the praise of St. Augustin, and a page in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*. Charlemagne wrote a preface for the Collection which Paul the Deacon made by his orders from the Homilies of the Catholic Fathers:§ and there is even an Epistle from his pen, *De Gratiâ Septiformis Spiritus*. Angilbert, Abbot of Corby, sent the book of St. Augustin, *De Doctrina Christiana*, to the Emperor Lewis, and presented him with some verses on that occasion, in which he commemorates the pious humility with which he studies day and night to investigate the secrets of sacred wisdom:|| and Adalbert, Bishop of Lyons, exhorts King Robert to read the books of Augustin, Dionysius, and Gregory the Great; instances which make Mabillon observe how familiar with sacred readings were the ancient kings of the Franks. Symphorius Amalarius sends his books on the divine office to the kings, Lewis and Lothaire.

In later ages, many holy books were published, by means of the munificent zeal of lay persons, coming forward, like the Countess of Riccini in modern times, who has translated and printed at her expense, at Modena, a celebrated French work in defence of religion.

The women of the feudal castle were often skilled in theology: for, in so rep-

\* *De la Hogue Tractat. de Eucharist, cap. 11. art III.*

† *Serm. in die Paschæ.*

‡ *Desguerrois, Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 291.*

§ *Mabilonii Vetera Analecta, 73.*

|| *Id. 425.*

representing them, poets adhere closely to historical fact. And what shall we say of the theological lore possessed by the artists, poets, and musicians of the middle ages? Take any example from the innumerable instances that will occur to every one's memory. Behold that awful picture of Christ in the garden of Olives, by Guido of Bologna, which is in the museum of the Louvre. What a profound sense was here of the mystery of the passion, and of the sacrifice of the man God! Consider again Michael Angelo. Enter his house in the Via Ghibellina at Florence, where you see represented the various remarkable honors which were paid to him by the Pope, the Grand Duke of Florence, and the veneration of the people, with his own portrait, so expressive of the simplicity and manly carelessness of genius. What do you find besides in these walls which are in the same state as when he left them? His chapel and his holy paintings of devotion.

The King St. Louis used often to converse with the young Joinville as they were on the passage across the sea, going to the crusade. "Senechal," said he to him one day, "*Quelle chose: est-ce que Dieu?*" "Sire," replied Joinville, "*c'est si souveraine et bonne chose que meilleure ne peut être.*" "Vraiment, c'est moult bien répondu," said the king. "Autre demande vous ferai-je; savior; lequel vous aimeriez mieux être lépreux et ladre, ou avoir commis et commettre un péché mortel?" Joinville must have known well what was the answer that would please the holy young king, so faithful to the lessons of his saintly mother Blanche, but in a spirit of juvenile rudeness and levity, or at the bottom, perhaps, with that feeling which St. Francis de Sales ascribes to true humility, that would rather be taken for proud than humble, replied, that he would rather have committed thirty mortal sins than become a leper. The impression which these light words made upon the good holy king, belongs to history. "*Quand les frères furent départis de là il me rapelle tout seul, et me fit seoir à ses pieds, et me dit: comment avez vous osé dire ce que vous avez dit? et je lui répons que encore je le dirais. Et il va me dire: Ha! fou musart, musart, vous y êtes déçu; car vous savez qu'il n'est lèpre si laide que d'être en péché mortel. Et vous prie que, pour l'amour de Dieu premier, et pour l'amour de moi, vous reteniez ce dit en votre cœur?*"—"What can be more admirable," says a modern critic, "than the goodness of this king and saint, who, though a king and a saint, does not grow angry at the reply of the, young man, but allows the witnesses to retire, and does not reprimand him until he is with him alone?"

There is on record the judgment pronounced by a nobleman at the court of Henry IV. of France, in reply to the king's question respecting the relative merit of two religious orders. The conversation of the court, so far from excluding, sanctioned similar topics. Even so late as the age of Louis XIV. warriors, like Turenne and Condé, might have been heard discoursing upon the mysteries of religion,—women of the first quality, like Madame de Sevigne in letters to their friends, treating theological questions with erudition, while others, like the Duchess de Longueville, were wholly renouncing the world, and flying to cloisters, in order more effectually to assuage their thirst for heaven.

The letters of Fenelon to the Marquis de Seignelai were expressly designed to show the necessity for laymen to be well instructed in their religion. A great prince and military hero, the Duc de Chevreuse, in his letters to the same prelate, expresses himself with the utmost facility and precision on some of the most abstruse questions of theology: and the editor of this correspondence remarks, that the same learning belonged to many noblemen of the time. Certainly, the humble, artless replies of the young Duke of Burgundy to the letters of the Archbishop, which informed him in plain terms of the cutting language of the world respecting him, and in details which must have been most wounding to the pride of human breasts, indicate a degree of piety and of ascetic merit, which would edify men striving after perfection in a cloister.

The reserve and obstinate silence of the moderns on topics of religion would not indeed have been permitted by the doctors of the middle ages. "Some virtues," says St. Bonaventura, "we are bound to show before men and others to conceal. We are bound to make known our faith, charity, justice, truth, and contempt of the world—and we are to conceal extraordinary graces and alms."\* The heathen sage prescribed a practise which the moderns would think becoming only in a monastery. "Let discourse concerning God," said Epictetus, "be renewed daily more than food for your body."† Few of them, at the age of Cephalus, the father of Polemarchus, would say like him to a religious instructor, "If I had still the power of going up to the city, I would not ask you to come down here to Piræus, for I would then go to you; but now you must indeed come oftener here for my sake: for be assured, in proportion as other pleasures, those connected with the body, wither and fall from me, the pleasure of hearing noble discourse, and the fervor with which I long for it, increase continually."‡ But precisely similar to this would be the language of old laymen in the middle ages to the monks of the nearest cloister, to whom the knights of chivalry are represented as listening with eager fondness. Witness Spenser's knight, who lodged with the hermit:—

"With faire discourse the evening so they pas,  
For that old man of pleasing wordes had store,  
And well could file his tongue, as smooth as glas;  
He told of saintes and popes, and ever more  
He strow'd an Ave-Mary after and before."§

Reverential and devout in the highest degree was the common tone of heroic conversations during the reign of those manners which had been created by faith. Dialogues, speculative and mysterious, were held in the evening in castles, under the vaulted roofs of the old manorial house, in parks, under the shade of melancholy boughs, and during rides, along the storm-beaten shores of the wild ocean.

The piety of the laity, during the ages of faith, is also seen in a very remarkable

\* De Reformat. Hom. Inter. cap. 18.

† Plato, de Repub. Lib. I.

‡ Epicteti Sententiæ.

§ Fairy Queen, I. 1.



light in their conduct relative to the clergy, on which body it would seem as if their character had exercised no small influence. For while the laity venerated the clergy, the clergy respected the laity, and zealously favored such of them as showed a disposition to a holy life, not excluding them from their society and from assisting at their offices, as if on account of their secular habit, they must necessarily have the mind and manners of the vulgar and profane, but rather encouraging them, and granting them free access to their holy cloisters and learned schools.

Paul the Deacon, in his Epistle to King Charles, son of Pepin, explains to him the various customs of the monks of Monte Casino respecting the division and chant of their Psalmody, as also their rules of fasting and abstinence.\* Let it be observed too, that all this was done with a perfect understanding and from exact principle.

Hugo of St. Victor makes the remark, that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, who was invested with no dignity of ecclesiastical administration, but merely a man estimable among the people, in the form of his salutations gives no precedence to the priest over the laic, but names Philemon before Archippus, who was Bishop of Colossa.†

In truth, there was good reason for respecting the heroic piety of the laity, which in some instances seemed to leave the devotion of the religious in the shade.—When the King of England threatened the monks of Citeaux with the loss of their possessions in his kingdom for giving an asylum to St. Thomas of Canterbury, they gently gave the archbishop to understand that he could not remain with them any longer. “O religion! O religion! where art thou?” exclaimed the King of France, scandalized at this cowardice of the monks, “Lo, they whom we thought dead to the world, now banish, for the sake of temporal goods, him who is an exile for the cause of God.” ‡—We read in the Spiritual Meadow of Sophronius, that when three Anachorites came to the cave in which Nicholas lived they found him conversing with a secular man, and asking him to say something that would be edifying.§

We do not find that the clergy, in their solicitude for the interests of laymen, were above attending to the influence of locality upon sensitive minds. At least, they did not consign men to live with the dissipated in the very precincts of corruption, with the slaves of worldly industry and vain pleasure, surrounded with every object that can debase and contaminate the purity and nobleness of the soul, and then express wonder that these persons were not saints. Wishing them to be truly spiritual, they endeavored to facilitate the way before them, by using all the human means which their experience and sagacity could point out as calculated to accomplish that end. They invited men therefore to join in the society of the holy, and they allowed them to reside in buildings, of which the

\*Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis.

† Annot. Elucid. Quæst. super Epist. ad Philem.

‡ Vita Quadrip. 85.

§ Cap. 154.

very walls seemed to proclaim the wisdom and happiness of the just. The laity accordingly, in consequence of these advantages, comprised other characters besides the man of business and pleasure. There were in that class the scholar and the man of contemplative habits, who attended to the duties of Mary as well as of Martha.

This reciprocal influence was most powerful in the middle ages. The clergy were consoled, strengthened, and perhaps, not unfrequently retained in the spirit of their order, by the noble and devout character of the men whom they guided, as Manfrid in the tragedy is warned and comforted by the rude chamois hunter.

It would be thought strange in our times to find laymen and military nobles administering fraternal admonition, in letters addressed to priests and saints, and consoling them in calamity, by repeating texts of the holy Scripture. Yet such conduct would not have been deemed indecorous in the middle ages. After the death of Pope Clement V. when there was great opposition of interests, and delay in electing his successor, Dante, so remarkable for the submissive docility of his genius, wrote a fine letter to the dispersed cardinals, in which he exhorts them to re-unite immediately, to stop this anarchy, so injurious to the Church, and to bring back the holy see to Rome. In fact, nothing is more common in the literature of the middle ages, than to find letters, and other documents of this kind, which one might suppose had been composed by persons of a religious profession. The testament of Count Gerard, in which he founds the monastery of Vezelay, in Burgundy, concludes with these words —“We pray you all then, most holy fathers and bishops, by our Redeemer, that to this work of our devotion you would always continue laborers and assistants in all things, that these our pious and dearest servants may always attend to the interests of devotion and religion, and that in all things they may show themselves as the ministers of God, giving no offence to any one, that the most religious and holy order of their ministry may not be blamed; that the pontiff of the apostolic seat may be a ruler to them, and comforter and guardian, being united together by the most faithful charity and religious obedience, as members of the body of the Church, and worthy of being joined to the head of that whole body, which is Christ.”\*

When Count Aylwin, alderman of England, was laboring under his last sickness, coming to the abbey of Ramsey, which he had founded, he gave spiritual counsel to the monks, and began as follows, as he stood leaning against a pillar :—“Be not angry, my brethren, seeing that you, being learned and instructed in divine discipline, should be admonished by a layman and a sinner. For in ploughing the earth, you see that the oxen who go first are induced to labor more cheerfully, by hearing the voices of those that follow them.” Then after a long spiritual discourse which might have been delivered by an abbot, he took a solemn leave of the brethren, and passed over in a boat from the abbey.†

\* *Historia Vezeliacensis*, Lib. I. apud Dacher. *Spicileg.* Tom. III.

† *Hist. Ramesiensis*, Pars II. 62, apud Gale *Hist. Brit.* Tom. II.

Nor was the zeal of the laity in these relations confined to admonitions; it prompted them to acts corresponding. Ladislaus, King of Hungary, in the year 1404, addressed the governor of the city of Boyinum in these terms:—"Grievous to us are all injuries incurred by any of our faithful people; but those inflicted on the churches and on ecclesiastical persons are so much the more so, as we naturally regard them with a more especial affection."\*

Charles, Count of Flanders, was a great warrior, and withal a pious and just man. He was so humble and devout towards God, and all ecclesiastical men and monks, that he used often to entreat them that they would tell him of his faults in the proper time and place, and that they would pray to God for him. In his court, he used always to despatch first the causes of ecclesiastics, saying that the servants of God ought not to be detained in the courts of princes. It happened once that John, abbot of St. Bertin, at St. Omer, entered the count's court on the day of the Epiphany, to whom the count said, "My Lord Abbot, who is to sing high mass for us this day, on this holy solemnity, in your church?" The abbot replied, "My Lord, there are an hundred monks in the monastery, so that there will be some good man to celebrate it." The count answered, "On such a festival you ought to have been in your college to chant the psalms with the chanters, to feast with those that feast, and to give recreation to your monks who labor in the service of God; for to this end did our fathers assign revenues to you." "My Lord," said the abbot, "necessity compelled me; for a certain soldier has oppressed us." The count replied, "It would have been sufficient to have informed me of this by a letter or a messenger, for it is my business to defend you as it is yours to pray to God for me." Then he gave redress, and the abbot returned consoled.†

The devout laity knew how to reprove what was evil in members of the clergy. "Baldwin the Bearded, Count of Flanders, began to build a castle at Bergen, but changing his resolution, he constructed instead of it a monastery, in honor of St. Winoc. The cause of it was this. The canons of St. Martin at that place were reported to be but little devout, and it was said that they neglected the divine offices. The count, desiring to ascertain the truth, disguised himself one night, and when the warden opened the church to strike the signal for matins, he entered as if to pray. The warden having struck the signal for matins, and no one coming, wished to shut the church door, and he obliged the count, whom he mistook for a poor man, to go out; but the count replying that he wished to hear matins, the other told him that it was all finished, and that they never rose for matins. Upon this the count resolved to build the new monastery, and thither he translated the body of St. Winoc, and he richly endowed it, and placed in it monks from the abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer."‡

\* Italia Sacra, Tom. VIII. 266.

† Chronic. S. Bertini, cap. 41, Pars. II. apud. Martene Thesaurus Anecdotorum. Tom, III.

‡ Chronic. S. Bertini, cap. 36, Pars 2.



Gervaise attributes the conversion of the Abbot Suger as much to the admonitions of Charles the Good, Count of Flanders, as to the grief which his death occasioned him. Charles, a prince of consummate virtue, was distinguished both by his valor and his piety. He had been offered the kingdom of Jerusalem during the imprisonment of Baldwin II. and the crown of the empire after the death of Henry V. and he refused both through Christian humility. His conversation almost always turned upon piety ; and Suger, who had the honor of being in his company during the campaign of King Louis against the nobles of Clermont, was charmed with his goodness ; whereas, on the other hand, the count was pleased with the abilities of Suger. The count was attached to him from a consideration of his talents, and of his being an abbot ; for he loved and respected all churchmen. Meanwhile, the virtue of the prince had made an impression upon the mind of Suger, and had inspired him with a kind of veneration, so that he often styled him blessed and a saint, and herein was not deceived, for he only anticipated the judgment of the Church.

This union of hearts being formed, the count returned to Flanders and Suger to Paris, where, immediately on arriving, he heard of the tragical death of the count who was assassinated in the church of St. Donatian, at Bruges. All the circumstances of this detestable murder were full of horror. Being an exact and firm administrator of justice, especially in defending the poor and helpless from all acts of violence, he had resolved to investigate the measures of certain men who had made a fortune during a famine, by availing themselves of the distress of the people, with whom he had sympathized to such a degree as to make himself poor, and even to sell his furniture and clothes to assist them. Two of these wicked rich men resolved to cut him off, and for this purpose selected the church as the proper place. It was on Wednesday after the second Sunday of Lent. The count being risen, distributed his alms according to his constant custom, the first thing each day, barefooted, and kissing the hands of the poor, with a great faith, regarding in them Jesus Christ. Then he went to the church ; and as he proceeded thither, a stranger warned him to be on his guard, but he replied, "Our precautions are vain against the misfortunes which menace us. It is enough for our peace if we have the happiness to appertain to God. He is all-powerful and always present, and nothing can happen to us contrary to his will. Nothing can be more glorious to a mortal man, who cannot guard himself against death, than to die for the defence of justice and truth." Thus saying, he proceeded on his way. On entering the church his chaplains left him to sing Prime, and he went to his prayers before the altar of the blessed Virgin. After many genuflections, he prostrated himself wholly upon the ground, to say the seven Penitential Psalms. The conspirators now entered with naked swords under their cloaks. They found the prince in that posture, with some money near him, which his chaplain had placed for alms, which he used to give even during his prayers. One of them, named Bouchard, touched him that he might raise his head ; but the count, thinking that

it was a poor woman whom he had seen near him asking alms, took a piece of money and raised himself a little, at which moment the assassin struck him with his scimitar, so that the brains fell upon the pavement. The others then fell upon his body, and even cut off his arm, which he had stretched out to give alms. The news of his death struck Suger with great force. The count had given him salutary advice: for if Charles the Good loved persons consecrated to God, he wished at the same time that their conduct should be edifying; and he had been constrained to testify more than once to the abbot what he thought of the tumultuous and secular life which he passed at the court of France. The words of this prince now returned to his heart; and this was the second battery used by God to conquer that great soul rebellious to his grace.

In the days of decay of discipline at St. Denis, when Abaillard, though persecuted by the evil monks, could not obtain leave to quit that monastery, the cause being referred to the royal council, Stephen of Garlande, seneschal of France, a man of acute mind, is thought to have contrived, by an ingenious speech, both to urge the claims of Abaillard, and also to give a useful lesson to the religious themselves. "It is for the king's interest," said he, "that this abbey be not reformed, as Abaillard would have it if he remains there, because the greater the irregularity, the more money will the king be able to draw from it. Therefore (he concluded) it was for the interest of all parties, since the monks themselves were unwilling to be reformed, that Abaillard should obtain his dismissal."\*

In nothing, however, does the zeal of the laity in these times appear more amiable than in the love with which it inspired them for the clergy, and in that thirst which seems to have constantly impelled them

"To talk with good men, or come near their haunts."†

Poets, in praise of a king whom they loved, would remind men of the love which he entertained for the clergy, as Martial d'Auvergne, pronouncing the eulogium of King Charles VII. exclaims,

"Las le feu Roy Charles le Débonnaire  
Aymoît les clercs."‡

To love clerks and knights was the boast of chivalry. "Mais les clers et les chevaliers en ma jeunesse ay voulu haüter voulentiers," says the historian of du Guesclin, "et souvent et le cuer de moy ferment y trait."§

The Archduke, Leopold William of Austria, is described as evincing a particular affection for all the monks of every order. "He took delight in their company; and while a boy, he used to run up to them as soon as he saw them coming. In maturer years he evinced for them the greatest respect: it was his delight to converse familiarly with them, and to hear them speak of spiritual things. He

\* Vie D'Abell. Liv. II.

‡ Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roi Charles VII.

† Dante, Purg. XVI.

§ Chronique de Du Guesclin.

used often to dine with them, and he would kiss their habits and would always salute them with reverence whenever he met them on the way."

The famous Robert the Strong, Count of Blois, had so singular devotion for St. Aignan, Bishop of Orleans, that he changed the name of his Castle Hayard, and called it St. Aignan.

Until the fifteenth century, it was the etiquette of courts that a bishop should take the precedence of a prince. It was deemed a noble privilege of illustrious families to have the right of showing the first honors to a bishop on his entrance into his diocese. The seigneurs de Montmorenci, possessing the first fief of the bishopric of Paris were the first barons who used to support the person of the bishop on his entry, and to hold the dais over his head on his reception.\*

The Bishop of Nantes used to be conducted on horseback from the almonry of St. Clement, where he had slept, to the gate of St. Peter, by the Baron of Châteaubriand, who held the bridle. He was thence borne into a chair to the cathedral by the first four barons of the diocese—the Barons of Pontchâteau, Retz, Ancenes, and Châteaubriand. The noble family of De Thuissy enjoyed similar privileges, in relation to the honor paid to the Archbishop of Rheims.

It is not irrelevant here to make mention of these forms, since they were clearly monuments of the love of the laity for the clergy in early times; the indications of which, however, are undoubtedly beheld in a more interesting point of view, when we proceed to remark its spontaneous action in the various circumstances of life. When St. Aiden first came out of Ireland to Lindisfarne, King Oswald received him with the utmost reverence and humility, and took great delight in hearing his holy discourses. Then was seen that beautiful spectacle of a king serving as an interpreter of a holy priest, while preaching the Gospel to a people whose language was not perfectly known to him: for St. Aiden did not speak English: but the king during the long period of his exile, had learned the language of the Scots.†

Burchard the Pious, Count of Corbeil, is said by historians to have loved the persons of all ecclesiastics.‡—Louis-le-Gros, when a youth, receiving his education in the abbey of St. Denis, used often to leave the company of great lords, who used to come to the abbey from time to time to pay him their respects, in order that he might rejoin the company of Suger, with whom he loved to converse. In the year 1372, Charles le Sage, for the love which he bore to brother Peter of Villars, of the Dominican convent of Troyes, who was then his confessor, ennobled, by letters from the Louvre, his brother Nicolas Champagne of Villiers, and all his posterity.§

It is recorded of the Abbot Euticius, that he was so much beloved by the Emperor Louis le Debonnaire, that "he built a monastery for him within the

\* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, Tom. III. 388.

† Petr. Lombard. Archiepiscop. Admach. de Hibernia Commentar. 187.

‡ Lebeuf, Hist. de Diocese de Paris, Tom. XI.

§ Desguerroys, Hist. du Diocese de Troye, 378.



walls of his palace :” and of St. Benedict, the Abbot of Ania, we read—“ because on many accounts he was necessary to him, it pleased the emperor to provide a suitable place for him, not far from the palace, in which he could rest with a few others.” Lewis, in fact, built this monastery of Tuda, near the palace of Aix-la-Chapelle, where he frequently remained.\*

In the year 1145, Gui de Vaugrigneuse, son of Burchard Seigneur de Vaugrigneuse, showed such an affection for the monks of Longpont, that he would not set out for the war in the Holy Land, which began about this time, until he had embraced all the monks of the abbey, in which house his nephew was at the time professed.†

In all these instances, we may be sure that the motive was the same as that spoken of by the author of the *Chronicles of St. Benign at Dijon*, who, after describing how greatly Halynardus, Archbishop of Lyons, in the eleventh century, was loved by Robert and Henry, kings of the Franks, and also by the Emperor Conrad and his son Henry, adds, that he was thus beloved and venerated by them, “*pro religiosâ conversatione ac famâ sanctitatis.*”‡ It was for the same reason that, when St. Anselm was on the continent, kings and nobles sought with such fervor to show him honor and friendship.§

The proofs of love for holy men, evinced by the laity during the ages of faith are often contained in episodes of great beauty, from which scenes might be taken that would not be unworthy of the noblest muse.

It was at a paschal solemnity, when the nobels of the whole kingdom, both clergy and laity, were assembled at the court of King Edgar, that Count Aylwyn first met St. Oswald. The count was a devout and brave warrior, venerable and courteous, revering the love of God in others, and adorned with so many graces, that it was doubtful whether one ought most to praise or to wonder, on seeing such virtue in an illiterate man. He was struck with the countenance and air of the holy bishop on seeing him chanting the office of the dead at the funeral of a certain soldier, whose body he was escorting to Glastonbury. No sooner was the office finished than he went up and accosted the holy man. “Long ago, holy father, I was wishing for an opportunity of forming a friendship with you, and of being able to refresh myself by listening to your sweet and learned discourse. I am a man under the power of another, and having others under me, whom nobility of birth, abundance of riches, the sinful wisdom of the world, the gift of speaking, and in short, the public favor of the poor and rich, hath exalted. And since all power is from God, I fear lest I should abuse that power to the destruction of my soul—for I know, that to whom much is committed, much will be required.” The holy priest, beholding the faith of the man, admired and re-

\* Mabillon. *Præfat.* in *III. Sæcul. S. Benedict.* § 8

† Lebeuf. *Hist. du. Diocese de Paris*, Tom. XX. 230

‡ *Chronic. S. Benigni Divionensis apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.*

§ Will. Malmes. *de Gestis Pontif. Anglor. Lib. I.*

plied to him with a serene countenance—"It pleases me to contract a friendship with you, most noble of men—it pleases me to observe this affection of pure liberality, which preventing all my merit, before I had boldness sufficient to demand of you, hath given me such proof of love. I am thankful to God for having sown such seed in your heart, the fruit of which I behold so abundant: and I trust that it may lead you to feel hope rather than security. Consider, therefore, dearest son, that in proportion as you are exalted in secular power, so are your life and works beheld by all men. And although some are preferred above others, yet we have all an equal beginning of life, and we are all under the same law of death. We are all alike born in sorrow, and we live in sorrow, and in sorrow we terminate our course, nature constituting to us all one common origin and end, since our only difference can be in the degree of our separation from God. What doth noble birth profit him who is under the dominion of sin? He is truly noble who shines in virtue of mind and manners. In all the Scripture you will find that the poor are commended, and the rich made but little of. It is useful and lawful to have riches, provided you remember that it is the mind which is to govern. It is lawful to have command, but it is safer to be subject—for destruction is near all that is exalted. Witness him whose body we now carry to the tomb, who lately was clothed in silk raiment, and who had such rank and power in the court of kings!—Now all is departed from him, excepting whatever merit he may have laid up in store."—

At these words the duke began to weep, and said, "What then will become of me, holy father, who am involved in so many necessities opposing my good-will—regal affairs, warlike engagements, stipendiary and judicial?" To whom the holy bishop replied, "All these worldly occupations, my dear son, may contribute to your increase in justice, if you preserve equity in all your ways, and mercy in your judgments, and simplicity in your intentions: but since sometimes even a good intention may be darkened by a false species of right, you should redeem your sins by alms to the poor and to the churches. Therefore, if in any part of your territory you should have a place proper for those who profess a religious life, you should build a monastery there in the honor of God, and collect holy men there to celebrate the divine service, by whose prayers your sins may be expiated. I will co-operate with you, and will grant faculties." The count replied, "Venerable father, there is a certain farm on my lands called Ramsey, surrounded by a marsh, and sufficiently adapted for the retreat of such men—for it is solitary and peaceful—it is also adorned with many trees, and contains fertile meadows. Formerly there was no building there but a stable for my flocks, but lately having been admonished by a dream in sickness, I constructed a small wooden cell in that place to lodge monks of St. Benedict, where three at present reside, and where I had proposed to build a church." The bishop approved of this intention and consented to accompany the count to inspect the place. The result of this journey was the foundation of that abbey—the bishop testifying his joy, and

saying, "Be this your place of rest for ever. Here dwell after your death, since you have chosen it. The occasion of building this house will be a bond of everlasting friendship between us; for by a temporal building we shall, if our faith fail not, prepare to ourselves a mansion of eternal safety."\*

Indeed, almost every monastery was a monument of the love for holy men which animated the laity during the ages of faith. Gaufrey, the illustrious Count of Poitiers, whose noble ancestors had founded so many religious houses, was a man of the greatest piety and justice. He founded the abbey of Poitiers, and great was his joy when he saw the abbot and his monks established in this noble house, which he had built for them. Whenever he was at Poitiers, he suffered no day to pass without alighting there; and when he came from a distance, he would not go to his palace before he had visited the monks, whom he used to call his lords. He used to go into the kitchen and into the cellar, and ask what the monks were to eat that day; and when he heard that it was some eggs, or a cheese, or some little fish, immediately he would order his purse-bearer to give money, that something better might be prepared. Who could describe with what obedience, liberality, and piety, he would minister to their wants? how benevolent he was to all men, but to them above all, how humble and how devout! When lord of many, he made himself the servant of his monks! Who so greatly honored, adorned, and edified the church! On one occasion a certain monk who had been injured came before him, at the moment when he was greatly occupied in the care of public affairs, so that he answered rather sharply; when the monk, seeing himself slighted, went away dejected, but the duke soon recollected himself, and was grieved to think that he had dismissed the servant of God sad. He sent after him immediately, and had him brought back. Then he begged his pardon for having made such an unkind answer, and gave him justice as to the cause of his complaint.†

Of the love entertained for Arnulph, the thirteenth abbot of Ville Moutiers, both by monks and seculars, the history of that monastery gives many instances. "By princes," says the chronicle, "he was greatly venerated, especially by Henry, Duke of Brabant, who had a singular affection for him and his convent. Hence, when he had assembled the great lords of his territories in council, he used to invite the man of God to come there; and when the nobles saw him come, they used to say that the key of the council was left with him. When this true pastor had saluted them all, and had been received with worthy honor, he would ask the lord duke for what cause he had called him into his presence, when such arduous affairs were to be arranged, since it was known to him that he was a simple man, and inexperienced in earthly matters: and the duke would say to him, 'My dear father, I have called you here and received you with this honor, that my nobles

\* Hist. Ramesiensis, Hist. Brit. Tom. III.

† Fragment, Historiæ Monasterii Pictarensis apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. Tom. III.



and judges may see what love I have for you, and for your whole convent ; that they may never molest you or yours, but rather nourish and defend you. Do you be the abbot within in the things which pertain to the honor of God and the salvation of souls, and I will be the abbot without, in all things which pertain to the utility of your house, in guarding your possessions, and punishing all who shall presume to disturb you.' This noble prince was in the habit of receiving every year a tunic, made of the cloth of our monastery ; and he used to say that he feared no danger when he was armed with such a habit. When he died, he ordered himself to be buried in our monastery, which he so dearly loved and so highly honored. When his obsequies had been celebrated in Lorraine, and his body was approaching the monastery, the community went out to meet it processionally ; but when we first beheld his coffin, our entrails were moved, and our tears flowed, and we could not refrain them, considering our patron, who had so long defended and honored us.—Who can relate what prayers and psalms and masses were offered for him ? He knows them who gave us the will and the power, who is God blessed for ever."\*

Almost all the monks of Canterbury having been exiled by King John, in consequence of their resisting his resolution to intrude by force an archbishop upon that church, these holy men passed into France, and were received every where by the abbots with all humanity and piety. The count of Gisnen, hearing that they had entered his territories, went out affectionately to meet Gaufray the prior and his monks, and saluting them, he led them with great marks of honor to his castle of Tornehem to his countess, and there he compelled them to dine in his family, and he himself officiously served them at table, and there was a grand and abundant feast for them ; and though there were more than eighty monks, he provided a horse, or a conveyance of some kind for every one of them, and he ordered them to be conducted as far as St. Omer by his own servants, of whom he is said to have had as many as a hundred, some on horseback, and others, as is the custom, attending on foot : and when their coming was announced to the convent of St. Bertin, they were met processionally and then shown all hospitality, and thus they passed through France and Flanders, till the year 1213, when they were honorably recalled to Canterbury.†

These details are assuredly interesting. What proof do they furnish of the meek filial reverence of the laity, during the middle ages, for persons of holy profession ! and what an insight do they yield into the real secret of that spirit of submission to them, for which this period of history is so centaaurically blamed by modern writers ! Let us take but one example more, and that from any of the letters addressed to St. Hildegard, which are all very remarkable.

Philip, Count of Flanders, addresses her in these terms :—"Your holiness should

\* Hist. Monast. Villariensis, Lib. I. cap. 8, apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. Tom. III.

† Chronicon Andrensis Monasterii apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IX. p. 563.

know that I am prepared to do whatever I shall learn to please you, because your holy conversation and virtuous life has often sounded in my ears sweeter than all fame. For although I am a sinner and unworthy, yet I love with my whole heart the servants and friends of Christ, and I gladly honor them in every manner with veneration, remembering that Scripture, 'Multum valet assidua justi deprecatio.' Therefore I send to the grace of your piety the bearer of these presents, my most faithful servant, who will speak with you for me, a wretched sinner. And I desire greatly to speak to you, but my occupations are every day so urgent, that I have not leisure to do this: for the time approaches when I am to go to Jerusalem, for which end I need great preparation, and concerning this design, to intimate your advice to me by letters: for I believe the fame of my name and actions has often reached you, and I am in great need of the mercy of God in many things. Therefore, with great earnestness of entreaty I beseech you to intercede with the Lord for me, who am a miserable and unworthy sinner, and, as far as the Divine mercy shall enable you, to inquire from God what is expedient for me, and to send me your advice by the bearer of these presents, stating in what manner I should act in order that the name of Christianity may be exalted in my times, and the dire ferocity of the Saracens repressed, and whether it will be better for me to remain in that land or to return."

Such, then, was the spirit of reverence and love for holy persons, which animated the laity of the middle ages: such is the testimony which it supplies to the intensity of their thirst after justice. It only remains to close this division of our history with some general reflections, suggested by the facts which have been passed in review.

## CHAPTER X.



TO know the character of men, we do not inquire what they believe, or what they hope, but what they love :\* which remark of St. Augustin may be verified by referring to Homer, whose expression for the character of a people is always taken from the object of their predominant affection—as where he speaks of the Taphians loving the oar,†—as also in any of the Platonic writers, who assign places to men in relation to philosophy, according to the particular love which they cultivate, in proportion as they are lovers of the body or of the soul.

If we apply this rule to the history of men during the middle ages, we shall not be long at a loss to determine the name which peculiarly suits them. Distinctions, indeed, and exceptions, undoubtedly there were ; but the general language held respecting the laity, can leave no doubt on the mind of any impartial investigator. It is not that they loved glory, loved financial speculations, loved the law, loved assemblies, loved society—but we read constantly that they loved justice, loved communion with God, loved the churches, loved the saints, loved the clergy, loved the monasteries, loved the poor, that they despised the life of the world, through love of the celestial kingdoms.

Our conclusion must be—not that they surpassed the ancient Romans in strength, or the Gauls in heroism, or the Greeks in arts, or the nations of modern Europe in provision for the material interests of the temporal society, but that they surpassed all nations and people in piety and religion ; and as the Roman philosopher says, “in that one wisdom by which they perceived that all things are guided and governed by the providence of Almighty God.” Full of zeal and faith, their manners, their language, their deeds, were no doubt prodigiously at variance with the standard which is seen and followed wherever the modern philosophy has created legions.

They were more anxious that their country should be, as the ancient poet said, with greater accuracy of expression than of thought, *θεοφιλεστάτην*,‡ than that it should win martial glory or commercial greatness amongst nations. The inscription on a tower of Ens, in Upper Austria, attesting the tradition of Mark and Luke having converted that country, ascribes to it the highest privilege that was then the object of ambition,—

\* Enchirid. cap. 27.

† Od. I. 184.

‡ Æsch. Eumenid. 869.



"Aspicias exiguam nec magni nominis urbem.  
Quam tamen æternus curat amatque Deus."\*

The ancient poet, too, whose verses are still read upon the tomb of Guido, Bishop of Pavia, in the thirteenth century, attests that the inhabitants of that city gloried chiefly in their faith, and in their attachment to ancient manners:—

"Laudibus immensis exultat plebs Papiensis,  
Antiquum morem retinens, fideique decorem."

"As Rome," says the ancient writer of the life of St. Zenobius, "is supposed formerly to have rejoiced in the spoils of the slain, so did Florence now exult in the conversion of many to the Giver of eternal victories."† Every thing connected with the state bore a Catholic character. On one side of the ancient coin of the Dukes of Florence was seen the lily, as the secular insignia of that city; and on the other, the image of its tutelar saint, with his hand raised in the act of giving his benediction.‡ Ughelli describes money in the museum of a knight of St. Stephen at Pisa, of which one side showed the hereditary insignia of the Medici, and the other a fearful representation of the last judgment.§

The leaden seal of Boamund, Prince of Antioch, attached to a diploma of the year 1190, in the archives of the canons of Genoa, represented on one side the prince armed cap-à-pie, on horseback, galloping, holding a banner in his hand; and on the other, the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul.||

The men of these ages clung to the glory of the Catholicity of their state, of their institutions, of their history; and exulted in that prerogative in the same manner as Plato,¶ Sophocles,\*\* Demosthenes,†† and Æschylus,‡‡ claimed for their nations the honor of being loved by God.

What seemed above every thing admirable in Milan, and worthy of universal praise, was not its wondrous cathedral of marble, or its venerable Ambrosian basilica, but the devout spirit, the love and reverence for Divine worship, which, from remote antiquity, had been a characteristic feature in the manners of its citizens.§§ "For eternity," says St. Bernard to the Genoese, "I shall never forget your devout people, your honorable race, your illustrious city."||| In his days, even the grandeur and renown of Genoa were matters of a secondary consideration to its devotion and Catholicity. Venice enjoyed maritime empire and an immense renown; free from remote ages; powerful, not so much by propagating as by preserving liberty; illustrious, from the concord of its citizens, the wisdom of its senate, the order of its magistracy, the equity of its judges, the reverence inspired by its laws, the gravity of the fathers, the obedience of the people, the eloquence of the aged, the modesty of youth. But all these titles were forgotten, as of no

\* Germania Sacra, I. 16. † Italia Sacra, III. 14. - ‡ Id. III. § III. 480. || Id. IV. 878.

¶ Meno. \*\* Ædip. Col. †† Epist. IV. ‡‡ Eumenid. 869. §§ Italia Sacra, IV. 9.

||| Epist 129.

weight in comparison with the glory which belonged to it from having yielded to no city of the world in attachment to the Catholic religion, in which it was born, and in which it grew to that state of magnificence, strength, and felicity which rendered it the admiration of the world.\* “In this, I often considered myself happy,” says Simon Majolus, “that I was educated in Asti, that ancient city of Italy, so full of Catholic institutions and rites, and holy men, and which had been always free from the contagion of heresy.”† Consequently, these were not men corresponding to the type of the poet Ronsard, who could heap his praises equally upon Catholic princes and an Elizabeth of England.‡ They had offerings but for one altar.

The Emperor Valentinian was about to subscribe to the expense of Pagan rites. “What will you answer the priest,” said St. Ambrose to him, with holy zeal, “when he will say to you, ‘The Church does not desire your gifts, because you have adorned with presents the temples of the Gentiles? The altar of Christ rejects your donations, because you have made altars to idols; for no man can serve two masters. Why do you seek the priests of God, when you prefer to them the profane petitions of the Gentiles?’”§

Neither the honor nor the devotion of the middle ages would have merited the praise which Cardan bestows on the dexterity of the freed men of the ancients; “for when,” said he, “they were most faithful to their lords, yet they did not incur the resentment of their lord’s enemies. Who was more an enemy to Cicero than Anthony? yet the latter’s displeasure was not incurred by Laurea or Tyro, although they were men obedient to Cicero; and in like manner did Epaphroditus survive Galba.” || “Vivorum bonorum est, admodum irasci,” says Cicero. ¶ Men who had smiles for all opinions and all actions, would have been considered as calumniating the Author of nature, who gave it the power indicating displeasure; and as forgetting what is recorded of the immaculate and Divine Lamb himself, who is said to have looked round upon certain Jews with indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, to whom thus two passions are ascribed in one verse. “Woe to the country in which the Church has enemies, and from which the cry of the poor does not rise to Heaven against them!”

The philosophy of the middle ages recognized a legitimate object for the exercise of all the passions, which were given by the Creator, and intended for the noblest purposes, and which, when applied according to the design of God, are so many instruments of the highest good. Heavenly graces, in Catholic times, were grafted even upon human asperities, as gardeners contrive to make roses bud from the stem of briars. This is shown by St. Bonaventura, who says, “Desire belongs to man, that he may long for spiritual and perfect delight; anger, that he may never consent to crime, or to the enemies of God; grief, that he may feel

\* Italia Sacra, Tom. V. 1269.

§ Epist. XXX.

† Id. IV. 334.

|| Prudent. Civit. cap. 83.

‡ In Le Bocage. Royal.

¶ De Legibus, I. 7.

the enormity of sin, and the wretchedness of exile from his heavenly country; joy, that he may rejoice in God, and in the hope of possessing him for ever; love, that he may love God above all things, and himself and his neighbor for God and according to God, and all the works of God, because made by him; hope, that he may expect mercy and grace in a future life; fear, that he may dread losing God for ever; shame, that he may never dare to commit sin.”\*

The zeal of the middle ages would never have permitted men to adopt the line of argument proposed by Symmachus to the Emperor Valentinian, when he says, praying that the ancient worship of idols might be maintained, “Each side has its customs and its rites. The Divine mind hath distributed to cities various guardians and modes of worship. It is right to esteem as one and the same whatever all worship. We behold the same stars: the heaven is common. What doth it matter by what prudence each man seeks the truth? There is no possibility of arriving at so great a secret by one journey. But this is the disputation of the idle.” Had such language, which is also that of the moderns, been heard in the middle ages, it would have been met with the words of St. Ambrose, who replies on this occasion:—“You say we cannot arrive at so great a secret by one journey! What you know not, we have known by the voice of God; and what you seek by guesses we have found by the wisdom and truth of God. Therefore, your thoughts agree not with ours.†”

Certain it is that the whole spirit of the middle ages was opposed to the system termed of the just medium, which is advanced, and, as we may say, enthroned in these latter days. But how could it have been otherwise, since they were ages of faith, ages of poetry, ages of honor, ages of profound philosophic meditation on the origin and destiny of man. “In nature, as well as in human life, and in moral relations, light and warmth are inseparable: one power, which gives light, imparts warmth; where this is absent, there is eternal darkness, and also an eternal cold of death.”‡ As sir Philip Sidney admits, in his letters to Queen Elizabeth, “if a Catholic be a man, he must needs have that manlike property, to desire that other men should be of his mind.” Our ancestors, in fact could no more suppose that one doctrine could be the result of two contrary principles, than that parallels could ever join.

To say nothing of faith, the spirit of the middle ages was too Platonician to admit it. Socrates speaks of men who are a kind of middle character between a philosopher and a politician, who think themselves to be the wisest of men: σοφοὶ δὲ ἡγοῦνται εἶναι, he adds, πάνυ εἰκότως· μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν, πάνυ ἐξ εἰκοτὸς λόγου, for they partake of both ὅσον ἔδει, and enjoy the fruits of wisdom, without incurring its dangers and contests. “The position of these men,” replies Crito, “must be admitted to be specious and

\* De Reformat. Hom. Inter. cap. 20—cap. 36.

† S. Ambrosii Epist. Lib. V. 31.

‡ Friedrich von Schlegel, Philosophie der Geschichte, I. 21.



plausible." "It is so, indeed," continues Socrates; "but it has more plausibility than truth: for men, and all other things which are placed between two things, must necessarily partake of the nature of both of them. Those that are between evil and good, must be better than one, and worse than the other. Those that are between two good things, and not the same with them, must be worse than either of them. And those that are between two evils, must exceed each of them in evil, inasmuch as they must partake of the evil of the one, superadded to that of the other. So these men, being, in fact, the third from truth, endeavor to seem to be first." After showing that these proud pretenders to superior wisdom, in consequence of their system of just medium, are, in reality, but the third from truth, he concludes by observing that "they are objects rather of pity than of anger."\*

Nor is the doctrine of the moderns sanctioned by the Ethic page. "Things, it is true," says Aristotle, who, in language at least, must always be opposed to Plato, "may be corrupted in two ways: either through excess, *ὑπερβολῆς* or through deficiency, *ὑπ' ἐνδείας*.† The perfect man, therefore, *μήτε πλεονάζει, μήτε ἐλλείπει*.‡ True, as he admits, every excellency shuns equally excess and deficiency, and seeks the true medium; but, then, this medium he observes, does not consist in the thing, but in ourselves, *μέσον δὲ, οὐ τὸ τοῦ πράγματος, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸς ἡμᾶς*. Therefore, this admission is reconcilable with every possible latitude for the development of religion, virtue, and art; because the man whom God has endowed with a great soul and superior ability, may do things which might be excess to another, while to him they constitute the medium. Whereas the supporters of this system stupidly accuse men of exaggeration, if they see them perform deeds which surpass their own power. Moreover, the Stagyrite concludes that, strictly speaking, there can be no excess or deficiency of virtue; for as this consists in the true medium, whenever this is overpassed or unattained, men altogether sin.§

In regard to political and moral relations, their system is equally erroneous, and renders men guilty of what the poet Agatho condemns:—

*τό μὲν πάρεργον ἔργον ὥς ἡγούμενοι,  
τό δ' ἔργον ὥς πάρεργον ἐκπονούμενοι,||*

Neutrality in persons, as well as in states, is generally the worst of all parties; it is generally only a system of indifference, and of an egotism ill-disguised, which generally meets with its proper chastisement. Neutrality never secures either honor or glory: it is always more noble and more useful to show one's self a faithful friend or a declared opponent, than to remain indifferent to all the world, and render service to no one.¶ So thought Tasso:—

\* Plato, Euthydemus.

† Ethic. Lib. II. c. 2.

‡ Id. c. 6.

§ Ethic. Nicom. Lib. II. c. Magna Moralia, Lib. II. c. 3.

|| Clemens Alex. Stromat. Lib. V. 14.

¶ De Haller, Restauration de la Science Politique, Tom. III. 406.

—————"Except Tatine, none  
 Of all the Greeks went with the Christian host :  
 O sin, O shame, O Greece, accurs'd alone !  
 Did not this fatal war affront thy coast ;  
 Yet satest thou an idle looker-on,  
 And glad attendest which side won or lost ;  
 Now, if thou be a bond slave vile become,  
 No wrong is that, but God's most righteous doom."\*

This system of worldly wisdom, moderation, and liberality, in all ages, might be typified by the treason of Ganelon, in persuading Charlemagne not to follow the dictates of his own heroic generosity. While "faith," as Tertullian says, "knows of no necessities,"† this rule of life admits the necessity of Euripides, to kill one's mother, which the Stagyrice says is only to be laughed at.‡

The Catholic prudence of the middle ages dictated gracious thoughts, and rendered the language of men so amiable, that the Church could exclaim, "From the mouth of the prudent proceedeth honey ; the sweetness of honey is under his tongue, and his lips distil sweetness." The reformed prudence of modern times, which has the thoughts of Judas, sanctions and applauds Pilate's motive, who became a deicide, "volens populo satisfacere."§ Men call this latter prudence liberality, the just medium : Hell knows it under the name of Atheism. There its wretched victims were seen by the great Dante, when he descended in spirit to those regions of eternal grief:—

"O master ! what is this I hear ? What race  
 Are these, who seem so overcome with woe ?  
 He thus to me : 'This miserable fate  
 Suffer the wretched souls of those who liv'd  
 Without or praise or blame, with that ill band  
 Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious prov'd  
 Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves  
 Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them forth,  
 [Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth  
 Of hell receives them, lest th' accursed tribe  
 Should glory thence with exultation vain.' "||

During the ages of faith, this wretched state was known only as a thing that had been weighed and condemned. "There are men," says St. Bonaventura, "who calumniate virtue ; who call silence melancholy, gravity pride, the zeal of justice rash judgment, the repose and tranquillity of devotion laziness and indifference, mortification indiscretion, simplicity folly, the fear of God vain scruples, spiritual retreat, the love of singularity, modesty hypocrisy.¶ St. Theresa also describes men who always fear that a good action will cause a great mischief, and who seemed as if the demon had taught them to prophesy future evils a thousand years

\* I. 51.

† De Cor. Mil.

‡ Ethic. Lib. III. c. 1.

§ Marc. xv. 15.

|| Hell, III.

¶ De Sept. Grad. Vit. Spiritual, cap. 52.

before they arrive. The unerring text does not deem it sufficient to say, in praise of one whom it commends, that prudence is in the word of his mouth, without adding that wisdom rested in his heart. In contradistinction to the fears of prudence without wisdom, the spirit of the middle ages required men to throw themselves upon the sea like St. Peter. "If I were a person who might be desired to give my opinion," says their great representative, in regard of the noble mystic spirit, "I would never advise any person that, when any good inspiration did often move and set upon a soul, it should give it over for fear of not performing the work. For, if one go on merely and purely for the only love of our Lord, there needs be no fear at all of good success, since the same Lord is powerful enough to prevail in all things : and let him be ever blessed. Amen."\*

It is in life, as in many arts with such prudent minds, "*Dum satis putant vitio carera, in idipsum incidunt vitium, quod virtutibus carent.*" St. Bonaventura is of the same opinion :—"O devout soul, in whom Christ is at length spiritually born, fly now from the society of the wicked ! Ascend with Mary ; seek the counsels of spiritual men ; endeavor to follow in the footsteps of the perfect ; contemplate the words and actions of the good ; fly from the poisonous counsels of the perverse, who always seek to pervert and to hinder, and to quench the new inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and who, under the appearance of good and piety, pour out their venom of impious tepidity into the soul, saying, 'What you begin is too great, too arduous, intolerable, beyond your strength. Such things become not your state : your honor and your respect will be diminished by them. Heu heu ! quot et quantos maledicta mundialium consilia supplantaverunt, et conceptum in eis per Spiritum Sanctum Dei Filium extinxerunt.' This is that miserable and deadly potion which kills and extinguishes the fixed resolve. But there are others who seem, and perhaps are, good and religious, and yet, '*salvâ eorum reverentia,*' who are too timid, not remarking that, as yet, the hand of the Lord has not been shortened ; having a zeal towards God, but not according to knowledge ; as when, through compassion for corporal affliction, or fear of natural weakness, what they see others perform manfully, and what they judge to be good and holy, they do not dare to begin themselves, and even keep back others from the works of perfection, dissuading them, and saying that these things exceed the state of ordinary life, or that they do not agree with their imperfection, and will, therefore, furnish a just ground for accusing them of hypocrisy. Do you, then, O soul ! fly from these unlearned counsels, and ascend the mountain with Mary."†

What is the intelligence which can determine the just medium in religion ? Duns Scotus says that there can be no excess in tending to God by desire : ‡ and St. Bernard says, that the measure of the love of God is to have no measure. "If you have an infirm and earthly mind," says St. Bonaventura, and the men who

\* The Life of the Holy Mother St. Theresa, I. 6.

† S. Bonaventura de quinque Festivitatibus pueri. Tom. I.

‡ In Lib. III. Sentent. Dist. XXVI. 9, I.



would modify and give laws to the Church are not, in general, men exactly of empyrean conceit, "you will consider the least services as the greatest, and what is as nothing will seem most difficult to you ; and those things which you would willingly do for yourself, or for the lowest friend, you will think too grievous to be done for the Highest God. The infirm eye will abhor the irradiations of the true sun of justice, and will desire to walk in darkness ; you will triumph over spiritual men, and you will not know that you are yourself triumphed over by demons."\*

The steady uncompromising zeal of the piety of the middle ages is obnoxious to the taste of modern philosophers. Little can they understand the constancy of that poor Queen, Mary of Scots, to suffer an imprisonment of nineteen years, and then a cruel death, when, as Stephen Pasquier remarks, if she had renounced the Catholic religion, she knew that her prison doors would have flown open immediately.† They would have men imitate Alcibiades, who used to be seen, when at Athens, jesting, and keeping horses, and adopting an agreeable mode of life ; but, when at Sparta, cutting off his hair, and wearing a cloak, and using the cold bath ; when in Thrace, fighting and drinking ; and when he visited Tissaphernes, assuming the habits of luxury and effeminate refinement, and wherever he went, adopting the manners of those with whom he found himself.

The middle ages, on the contrary, admired Epaminondas or Agesilaus, for, though conversing with many different men, and visiting various cities, they always and every where preserved their own manners and dress, and mode of life. They admired Plato, for being the same at Syracuse as in the academy, and with Dionysius as when with Dion.‡ These former are men "rather point-device in their accountments ; as loving themselves, than seeming lovers of any others. They fancy that they appear most wise, when they make the greatest outward show of indifference : keeping whatever religious sentiment they may possess buried within their own breast, as if it were a treasure for themselves alone, which no one else might even look at. In truth, however, they are generally men without any fixed determined principles : at one moment they are heard eulogizing the Catholic religion ; and at another, condemning and scorning it ; like the Emperor Adrian, who, at one time, proposes to have Christ adored as God, and at another, persecutes those who worship him. The man of this class is described by Socrates as one who calls anarchy liberty, intemperance grandeur of soul, and insolence the mark of a right education. When grown old, if he should subside into a less troubled state, it will be only to give up the command of himself to whoever shall fall to him, as it were by drawing of lots : one time the slave to this man, and another to that ; having an equal respect for all, οὐδεμίαν ἀτιμάζων, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἴσον τρέφων and not regarding as true the saying which may be addressed to

\*Stimul. Divin. Amoris, Pars II. cap 5.

† Recherches de la France, Lib. VI. 15.

‡ Vide Plutarch de Dignos. Ver. Amic. IX.

him, that there are some pleasures proceeding from good and honorable desires, and others from evil ; and that it is necessary to pursue and honor the one, but to punish and enslave the other. But from all this he dissents with a throwing up of his head, and says that all are the same, and that they are to be honored alike, *καὶ ὁμοίως φησὶν ἀπάσας εἶναι, καὶ τιμητέας ἐξ ἴσου*. So he lives every day indulging graciously in every desire that occurs to him : onetime, getting drunk and playing on the flute ; at another, drinking only water, and confining himself to a slender diet ; at another, stripping himself for the gymnasium. There is a time when he is indolent and indifferent to every thing ; and there is another when he applies diligently to philosophy. Very often he takes part in political affairs ; and, as it were, by starts and bounds, he says and does whatever happens to please him. If he should ever feel a zeal for certain wars, he is borne in that direction ; or for making money, he is carried off in that. And there is never any order or necessity to him through life, but, considering this kind of existence sweet, and liberal, and happy, he continues it to the last. Such is the life of a man enjoying all things equally, corresponding in character to that of the democratical state.\*

He who does not recognize in this portrait the opposition between Catholic and modern times, when it is expressly said that ancient manners should be changed for new, corresponding to the political constitutions recently adopted, will have read Plato but to little purpose, or have but marvellous scanty knowledge of the philosophy of these two epochs in the history of man.

If we now consider the zeal and fervor of the ages of faith in relation to that standard of the beatitudes which they endeavored with all their strength to follow, we shall find still stronger grounds for preferring them to the system which has been created by the indifference of latter times. "It is one thing," says Richard of St. Victor, "to follow good from desire, and another from mere counsel ; it is one thing to do good with great delight, and another from deliberation alone. The one is good, like silver ; the other is best, like gold."† "What a difference," he exclaims, in another place, "between cold and red-hot iron, between soul and soul, between the tepid and him who is inflamed with Divine love."‡

To the gift of strength and courage corresponds the fourth beatitude,—"*Beati qui esuriunt* ;" for it requires great strength, as St. Augustin says, "to labor and obtain the sovereign good, and to leave earthly things." And St. Thomas says, that "it is an arduous thing, not only to do good but to do it with thirst and avidity." O how majestic and inspiring are the words of St. Bonaventura !—"We must hold the lance of zeal against the assault of vice, against the attacks of the devil, of the flesh, and of the world. Of this lance we read in Jeremiah, '*Polite lanceas, induite vos loriceis.*' It is with the lance of zeal that we must contend

\* Plato de Repub. Lib. VIII. † R. de S. Victor, de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. 24.

‡. Id. de Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis.

against evil. If you do not hold out the lance of zeal against vice in this world, God will put forth the lance of his wrath against you in judgment."

The zeal of the middle ages had, indeed, nothing to recommend it to the favor of utilitarian philosophers, or of self-interested reformers. "We have in our days," says Fuller, "many who are forward to offer to God such zeal which not only cost them nothing, but wherewith they have gained great estates."\* Such was not the Catholic zeal; neither did it resemble that of the mother of James and John, who came to adore Jesus, but only to ask that her sons might be promoted to dignity. Still less was it the zeal of Machiavelian sophists and artful rulers, who, like Catherine de Medicis, and Richelieu, Cranmer, and Elizabeth, wrought so many deeds of hypocritical renown. "All that," as Pasquier says, "was done under a different banner from ours; for those who were born under the true religion, knew that they had to maintain it Christian by zeal and devotion, not by political discourses, unless they wished to spoil all."† But it was the fervor of a Peter, the affection of a John, the sorrow of a Magdalen, the constancy of an Andrew. It was the zeal which Danté heard commemorated "amidst refining flames, when two spirits of the swiftly-moving crowd, which overtook him, cried, weeping, 'Blessed Mary,' sought with haste the hilly region."‡ It was the zeal of the shepherds and of the magi, who came to Bethlehem:—"You see how the shepherds hasten," says St. Ambrose, "for no one with indifference seeks Christ." It was the compliment of that character which the Church ascribes to her lay confessors, when she exclaims, "Ecce homo sine querela, verus Dei cultor, abstinens se ab omni malo, et permanens in innocentia sua."

By the law of nature, by the command of God, and by the consent of all nations, is the reasonable creature bound to evince zeal for the honor of the Creator. Hear, O ye supporters of the just medium! how a heathen sage reasoned within himself, when he heard men attack a mere abstract question, which involved, according to his judgment, the interests of Divine truth:—"For I was afraid," he says, "lest it would not be holy, having been present when justice was reproached, and when it was said to be less than injustice, a source of happiness, to give up *καὶ μὴ βοηθεῖν, ἔτι ἐμπνέοντα, καὶ δυνάμενον φθέγγεσθαι.*"§

It was not strange, therefore, that those who hungered and thirsted after justice, should have been always ready to say, with holy Israel's king. "Zelus domus tuæ comedit me:" evincing the zeal of an Ignatius for the glory of God, the zeal of a St. Louis for the exaltation of the Church, the zeal of the knight templar for the defence of oppressed brethren, the zeal of an Eligius for the salvation of men's souls, and for the reducing all things to the obedience of faith.

Men must needs possess hearts but little alive to the holy delicacy of the faith,

\* Thoughts, 245.

† Recherches de la France, III. 38.

‡ Purg. XVIII.

§ Lib. II. in cap. 2. Lucæ.

§ Plato de Repub. II.



who are unable to comprehend or justly appreciate the form of expression which the zeal of the middle age frequently adopted. What more beautiful offerings could they have made to Heaven, than their trust, their reverence, their love, the overflowing sentiments of their souls? Lewis of Grenada points out this zeal in contrast with the admonitions of human prudence. "Penitent Magdalen comes to Jesus: rightly," saith he, "but yet, O woman! you should wait for a proper time, that you may find the Physician alone, that you may not make your conversion a fable to the world. No time is less proper for tears and confession of sins than the moment of a feast. Wait a little, then, till the guests depart, and then you may have a fitting season for weeping and penitence. 'I cannot,' she replies, 'endure the horrible face of sin, even for this short space.' And so we behold this prudent woman fearing neither the number of the guests, nor the judgment of men, nor the contempt of the Pharisees, and coming instantly into the presence of Jesus, when, not content with watering his feet with her tears, she wipes them with the hairs of her head. Who ever heard of such service offered to any king or emperor, that his feet should be wiped with the golden hair of women? Such, however, is the zeal of true disciples to consecrate every thing beautiful to Christ."\*

The moderns, if we judge from their general manner of philosophizing, would discover in an act of this kind superstition or hypocrisy, and the device of a sensual unenlightened piety: our Lord has, however, decided against them:—"Propter quod dico tibi, remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum." The lily, which is seen in so many of the old devout paintings of saints was, in fact, a symbol of the delicate susceptibility belonging to the zeal of the middle ages. "The lily," as Christine de Pisan says, "is a tender flower, 'et de moult petit hurt est froissé et taché.'" Such was the affectionate devotion of men, that they would have shunned the least indication of neglect and indifference as a crime. Moderate in their expression, guarded and timid in their judgment, "jure videri" being their strongest sentence, always did those who had imbibed the genuine influence of the Catholic religion, take in the visage the stamp of that right zeal, which, with due temperature, glows in the bosom.†

The faith of the middle ages was, in a certain degree, the fruit of their zeal, as Lewis of Grenada observed. "For faith," said he, "is lost, when a man leads an idle, useless life; in accordance with that sentence of our Lord, 'Qui habet, dabitur ei et abundabit: ab eo autem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere auferetur ab eo.'" And St. Ambrose likewise says, that "faith unexercised quickly withers away, dries up, and passes into perfidy or heresy."

In conclusion, one may observe, that to the eye of faith the character of the middle ages appears most admirable, when viewed in contrast with the materiality and indifference to all interests of a spiritual nature which have superseded

\* Ludovic. Grantens, in festo B. Mariæ. Magdal. Concio. I.

† Dante, Purg. VIII.

it in the society of later times. From the dawn of the religious revolution, the progress of human minds in this direction became perceptible. Shakespeare himself, who is seated so near Dante, may occasionally furnish an example; for in what does he fall short of the great master, unless in that impressive zeal and constancy and lofty grandeur, which distinguish the fervent disciple? It is that he has the wavering of an age of criticism or of transition. One perceives that the spirit of Luther had already breathed upon Europe, and that clouds of doubt had collected upon the horizon, threatening to darken by degrees the beautiful sky of the old Catholic poesy. Accordingly one, who has drank deep of the spirit of antiquity, proceeds now through the fields of modern literature like Dante through the region of ice in hell, of which he says, "and I, trembling, went through that eternal chillness." When exposed to the influence of the books of modern sophists, the minds of men appear to become frost-bound and contracted: these pestilential streams are sure of their effect, however warm and generous may be the natural disposition of the nation they may ravage; like those Alpine waters of the Po, in the rich Lombardian plain, which astonish the traveller under the resplendent sun of Italy, by their cold and savage paleness.

"It would be in vain to dissemble," says Pelisson, "it is to an indifference and to a general uncertainty of doctrines and religion, that the confused ideas of our brethren lead us insensibly, but quite straight; they cannot even themselves stop it where they would wish, however they may talk about fundamental points."\*

During the middle ages, men the farthest removed from ecclesiastical influence, like Cardan, were ready to admit the proposition which he lays down in his work on wisdom, that "no manner of governing a republic can be useful which is disjoined from religion."† But, in the general shock given to ancient principles, those which related to the stability of empire were also questioned or set aside. In the reign of the last Valois, a party was formed in France, among the great, under the name of "the Political," which chose a middle place between the Catholics and Protestants; and thus opened the way to that social materialism, of which we live to see the development.

Francis I., through hostility to Charles V., calling the Turks into Europe, and Don Pedro II., of Arragon, joining the party of the Albigenses in France, Henry II. persecuting the religious innovators in France, and encouraging them in Germany, Philip II. of Spain, secretly fomenting the internal wars of France, and making religion an instrument of his ambition, Henry III., a Machiavelian scholar and disciple of Catherine, who carried religious indifference to the greatest length, endeavoring to find a balance between faith and heresy, Henry IV. forming an alliance with all the Protestant sovereigns of the north, in order to injure the house of Austria, Richelieu pursuing his reasons of state, with utter indifference to the vital interests of religion, transferring the government of the Valte-

\* *Reflections sur les Differends de la Religion*, Sect. VI.

† *De Sapientia*, Lib. V.

line, which was Catholic, from Spain to the Protestant Grisons, exciting the Protestant princes of Germany to carry devastation into the Catholic countries of the south, and seeking every occasion to strengthen their force, Mazarine following in his footsteps, the Congress of Munster sanctioning the doctrine that the interests of the earth were totally foreign from those of Heaven, and that, in matters of religion, every thing was true which suited the purpose of kings, who were independent of the law of God,—publicly establishing the principle of government, that there was nothing real in society but its material interests, and that truth and error could no longer be distinguished, rulers, and often tyrants, employing the ceremonies of faith for a worldly end, as Thucydides says of the Lacedæmonians, that their armies marched to the sound of many flutes, οὐ τοῦ θεοῦ χάριν, but that by means of the rythm, they might be kept from falling into disorder,\* France, supporting the pretensions of Sweden, and every concession to the most determined enemies of the Catholics, her government taking offence at the cry from the pulpits which resounded with the persecutions of the Catholics in England, and when the poet, Louis Dorleans, warning the French to beware of heresy and tyranny, lest they should suffer the same persecution, published a discourse to that end, which De Thou ascribes to his fanaticism, ordering the work to be burnt, and banishing the printer from France,†—all these men thus, as Pasquier says, Machiavelizing, in order to gain the reputation of ability, and ascribing every devout act to the subtilty of worldly wisdom, using the pitiful shifts of policy, and professing to follow the royal road of those saintly potentates who defended the Church of God in former times, while even the unreflecting people could clearly enough discern that they were only treading in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice—prepared the way for the establishment of that purely earthly republic, in which the thirst after justice is superseded by the thirst for advancement, and the authority of highest God made subservient to that of man ; as if the popular notions of the day were the sentence of a supreme, almighty tribunal—final and irresistible. For have you not marked the reply which is on every tongue when there is mention of sanctity and justice? Is it not always made in such terms as these—“Who can resist the spirit of the age, the force of public opinion, the will of the people?” Such was the language of those foul worshippers in the Apocalypse of blessed John, who were heard crying out, in their stupid admiration, “Quis similis bestię?” That is “Who can do such great things, and who can fight against him?” that is, resist his will? “For,” says Richard of St. Victor, “with such admiration will the reprobate regard anti-Christ, that they will think it impossible for any one, by retaining his faith, to resist him.”‡ The wisest of men acknowledge that it will be difficult. “We must do as others do—it is the custom of the world.” “Væ tibi flumen moris

\* Lib. V. 10.

† Gouget, Bibliotheq. Francaise, Tom. XV. 269.

‡ Super Apocalypium, Lib. IV. c. 4.



humani," cries St. Augustin; "quis resistit tibi? quamdiu non siccaberis?"\*

There is no point against which the holy Fathers warn men more repeatedly than this. "Beware," says St. Eucherius to Valerian, "of the maxim, that we should do and think with the multitude. What will it serve us to have followed this multitude, when we shall appear at the tribunal of God? Will it be there to defend us? Will its folly justify ours? Let us beware of such a delusion. Let us not renounce salvation and happiness because such a multitude lose themselves; let us not cease to watch because they sleep: let us not harden our hearts because they are insensible."

We read of the Jews, infected by the manners of the Gentiles, that the holy places were profaned and the solemn festivals no longer observed: "Nec simpliciter Judæum se esse quisquam confitabatur."† So it was in Catholic society when the atmosphere of the new opinions began to encompass it. No one had courage simply to confess himself a Catholic, but either he was one more liberal or discerning, or in some way distinguished so as to recommend himself to the favor of those who had practically or avowedly renounced the faith: he criticised, objected, modified, conceded—till at length, weak man! he experienced what is described by Plato, that, "yielding step by step a little, these small concessions all accumulating, at last there was a great deception; and opposite to what he had at first contemplated, and like those who play at the game of *peteia* without sufficient skill, who find themselves at length excluded from the line without having wherewithal to resume their place in it, so this man in the end was excluded, and had not wherewith to answer in this other kind of *peteia*, which consisted not in pegg, but in reasons."‡

Ah! these cavils of the moderns, calling out for modification, indicated a spirit widely at contrast with that of the lovers of justice during the ages of faith, when men regarded the Church with lovers' eyes, as Thucydides says of the Athenians in regard to their city—contemplating, day by day, its power and grandeur, and being as it were its suitors, *καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς*.§

Philosophy herself might have prevented men from being deceived here. "If," says Socrates, "we affirm of a person, that he loves any thing, it is necessary that he should show if we affirm truly concerning him that he does not love one part of the object, and not another, but that he loves it all, οὐ τὸ μὲν φιλοῦντα ἐκείνου, τὸ δὲ μὴ, ἀλλὰ πᾶν στέργοντα. Witness the disposition of men in the love which binds them to their dearest friends. In these they love even what might seem defects. They have praise even for every variety of feature. Are they of dark complexion? they have a manly aspect. Are they fair? they are the children of the gods: and so with every thing, in such a manner, that none are excluded from favor. They that love wine too have an excuse for every sort that might be inferior, loving all wine: and men that are ambitious of honor, if they cannot have

\* S. August. Confess. Lib. XVI.

† De Repub. Lib. VI.

‡ Lib. II. Machab. 6.

§ Thucyd. Lib. II. 43.

the command of armies, accept that of a company ; and if they are not honored by the greater and more noble class, they love to receive homage from the lesser and baser, being altogether lovers of honor. So that when we say any one loves something, we mean to imply, that he loves it in every form. In like manner, then, the philosopher is said to be a lover of wisdom ; not a lover of one part only and not of another, but of all wisdom.”\*

How then could it be said that a man loved the Church—and without that love, what was he in the eyes of Heaven?—if he were continually objecting to some part or other of its discipline, or even perhaps of its doctrine, according to the delusion of the moment, instead of evincing a universal and generous effusion of heart, in tenderest love for every thing that had relation to the mysterious mother of faith and sanctity ?

I know indeed the censure to which such reflections will expose those who utter them from the men who have the words liberality and moderation ever on their tongue. As this is not the moment to meet them in close combat, it will be better for the present to fly than to await their impetuous onset ; for the modern disputant comes upon the Catholic like Scamander when she rushed against Achilles, calling out to her sister Simous, thinking to vanquish him by means of a flood of waters, to wash him away, as a shepherd boy when caught by the wintry torrent. It was a fire which the poet summoned to the assistance of his hero ; and it will be well to remember that it is the fire of divine charity which will furnish the most effectual means of repelling the mortal influence of that cold and desolating flood, hitherto unnamed by human tongues, which is directed to overwhelm all that is divine and heroic, under one uniform and cheerless waste.

But it is time to bring this Fifth Book to a close. We have seen what was the thirst for justice during the ages of faith : we have seen how it was indicated in the recognized vanity of earthly possessions, in the unwearied voice of the Church night and day, supplicating—in the solemn and beautiful order of the festivals, in the love and fervor with which they were every where celebrated, and finally, in the devout spirit and holy practices of even that class of men, who were the farthest removed from the sanctifying influence of the Christian altars.

It remains to inquire, what is the evidence of history respecting the temporal verification of the Divine sentence, that those who experienced that thirst should be filled : and a review of its visible effects and consequences shall therefore be our occupation in the next Book.

\* De Repub. V.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK





MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

---

BOOK VI.



# MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

## AGES OF FAITH.

---

### THE SIXTH BOOK.

#### CHAPTER I.



OW let us to the blind, external world descend, for some will say that we have hitherto seen only shadows of justice on ideal ground ; yet, reader, after we shall have left the region of desires, and advanced some space along the path on which we are now entering, which seems with more realities beset, you will perhaps, at times, be well content to have incurred that charge. There may be moments in which you will feel like the pensive traveller at twilight hour, who journeys on through an obscure, cold forest, when he looks back with regret to the pleasant cloister's pale which had received him for a short space at noon ; brings before his mind's eye the rich garniture of its sanctuary, and imagines that he still gazes upon each peaceful nook, which he had noted with such interest, remarking how sweetly it was for prayer and meditation meet; thinks too that he sees the solemn, hooded men, and their youthful disciples, assembled in angelic choir, leaving no place vacant, while rings aloud that quick melody,

"Te lucis ante terminum."

Your feelings perchance will resemble his, when he contrasts this scene of peace and order which he has left, with the desert around him, dusk with horrid shades, and with his own wild state, solitary, wending he knows not whither—when o'er the broken passes, now each moment darker, there comes a gloomy sound, and a wind impetuous, sprung from conflicting vapors, drives all its might against the forest, plucks off the branches, hurling them afar, while beasts and shepherds fly.

"Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam : quoniam ipsi saturabuntur ;" truly mystic words of the Divine Ruler, which seem at first to promise no speedy consolation ; for how can the natural thirst, ne'er quenched but from the well where-



of the woman of Samaria craved, be ever satiated on that earth which is not his kingdom? It is true, a confidence in the ultimate triumph of justice characterized in a very remarkable manner the men of the middle ages. "One finds," says William of Jumièges, "in almost every page of Scripture that the son's house is overthrown by the iniquities of a wicked father, and also conversely, that it is rendered firmer by the merits of a good father."\* Speaking again of the conquest of England by William, the same historian beholds only fresh proof of the justice of God. "The English," he says, "were punished for the murder of the innocent Alfred, and for their remorseless massacre of Toustain; and on the following night God avenged them in causing a great slaughter of the Normands, because they had sought plunder, and 'their feet had been swift to shed blood.'"<sup>†</sup> Such observations are common in all writers at that time. Nevertheless, profoundly was it felt in the hearts of those thoughtful men that the beatitude arising from the spectacle of justice was not reserved for them here. Follow St. Bonaventura in his meditations on the Baptist's death: "O God, how didst thou permit this?" exclaims the seraphic doctor, "What is to be thought of this, that John should thus die, who was of such perfection and sanctity that he was thought to be Christ? Consider the greatness and excellence of John. Peter is crucified, and Paul is put to death with the sword; but yet the dignity remains to the precursor. Rome is purpled with the blood of Martyrs, but John is admirable above them all. Who so gloriously announced? Who thus filled with the Holy Ghost even in his mother's womb? Of what other man does the Church celebrate the nativity? It was he who first preached penance; it was he who baptized the King of Glory. John was a patriarch, but the chief and end of patriarchs. John was a prophet, but more than a prophet. John was an angel, but chosen among angels. John was an evangelist, but he first announced the Gospel. John was a martyr, but between the nativity and the death of Christ. He was the voice 'crying in the wilderness,' the precursor of the Judge, the herald of the Word. If now you contrast the excellence and dignity of John with the profound wickedness of those who slew him, you will have a just subject for astonishment; and, if it be allowable to say so, even of murmuring against God. For an executioner is sent to cut off his head, as if he were the vilest murderer. Behold him, then, reverently and with grief: see how he offers his neck to the executioner, and bends his knees, and, giving thanks to God, lays down his sacred head upon some block or stone, and patiently endures the stroke. Behold in what manner John departs—the intimate friend and relation of our Lord Jesus."<sup>‡</sup>

You perceive, reader, what strong language was permitted in the middle ages, in reference to the delay of justice, and you may conclude that it certainly was not by the beatitude of vision that just men expected to be satiated on earth. How, then, you will ask, did they interpret this divine promise?

\* Hist. Norman. Lib. VII. c. I.

† Hist. Norman. Lib. VII. 36.

‡ Meditat. Vitæ Christi, cap. 30.

It belongs not to an historian's part, to speak of its present and literal accomplishment in the hearts of men, by the operation of these ineffable mysteries of the Passion, designed by the Eternal Wisdom to fill with divine justice the weak and fragile vessels of the human nature.\* Only on what is visible to mortal eyes and productive of fruit on earth can he be required to speak; yet not less important is his evidence within just limits, to show how the sacred thirst of sweet desire might be at once partially allayed. Let us hear the gracious words again:

"*Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam.*" "Not the satiated, therefore," concludes Hugo de St. Victor, "but the thirsty are blessed; for," continues he, "all the good that mortal life can attain to, is to wish for good, since to possess it is reserved for the future life. If it had been 'blessed are the just,' who could have applied this to himself? But having regard to our imperfections, and compassionating our infirmity, the Divine Master pronounced those to be blessed who desired justice."† Here a clue is given to relieve us from our embarrassment, and to encourage us to proceed in the present history; for, having pointed out the thirst or the desire intellectual, which animated men in the middle ages, and being about to speak of the effects discernible, we infer from it that there is no necessity for our undertaking the task which the objectors would lay upon us, desiring us to exhibit that fulfilment which is only to take place when the Divine glory shall be revealed to human eyes, where souls shall never more hunger or thirst, but enjoy that fulness of pure and everlasting joy which the prophet tells of, when he says, "*Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua.*"‡ No, excepting by the ardor of desire and the light of faith, that glory had not appeared during the times of which we trace the history, any more than to these latter ages, or than it will appear to those which will succeed while the present state of things endures; for whatever some vain speculators may suggest, from time to time, to entice and deceive unstable minds, the infallible page forbids us to expect on earth the unresisted reign of justice—"Donec finiatur sæculum, sursum est Dominus."§ It was in fact enough therefore, for our purpose, to have proved that the men of the middle ages felt sorrow at the spectacle of injustice, and bore that mystic and expressive sign which in old prophetic days was shown to the man of God.

No one, however, required to be told that the Church, by such indications of a spiritual thirst, understood something more than barren sighs or empty symbols. "*Constitutum est,*" says an ancient author, "*veram devotionem non tam in precationibus quam imitatione consistere.*"|| She knew of no justice towards God, which did not include analogous duties towards man; of no beatitude for those who were unwilling to combat, and who did not exert all their efforts to win by perseverance the celestial crown.

"Non enim dormientibus divina beneficia," says St. Ambrose, "sed observan-

\* Ludovic. Blos. *Scriniolum Spirituale*.

† Hugo de St. Victor, *Eruditiones Theologicæ*, Lib. I. tit. 134.

‡ Ps. 16.

§ St. August. de *Consec. dist.* 2.

|| *Instruct. novit*, III. c. 4.

tibus deferantur.”\* The language which she addressed every evening to her combatants, resembled that of a general to his troops when in an enemy’s country, and might have been taken for a passage out of Thucydides, as that which gives the words of Nicias to his soldiers on the retreat from Syracuse. “Be courageous, for there is no place near where you can with indolence and effeminacy be saved,”  
*ὥς μὴ ὄντος χωρίον ἐγγὺς ὅποι ἂν μάλακισθέντες σωθείητε.*†

In the middle ages, this necessity was forcibly and briefly expressed by the letter of the mystic branch first used with such signification of Pythagoras, and, in Christian times, adopted by St. Isidore in his Etymologies to represent human life; the stem signifying youth, uncertain as to its ways, and the right arm most arduous to denote the laborious path of justice.‡ Those will, indeed, have read the last book to little purpose, who will need much assurance here; for to love and worship the divinity, was, as the Church declared, to be just. She prayed to Him who sheweth the light of his truth to those who err, that they may return into the way of justice; that all who made profession of Christianity might avoid the things which were hostile to that name, and follow those which were suitable to it.§ It was, in short, an universal conviction during the middle ages, that neither desire nor sorrow, nor prayers, nor hymns, nor festivals, nor any exercise of religion, could be more than vain, unless accompanied with works of justice, in obedience to the divine laws. Every one knew that there were two ways, as John, the monk of Cluni, observes in writing the life of St. Odo, in which men could become apostates from God; “that each man might depart from his Creator either in faith or in works; and that, as he who departed in faith was an apostate, so he who returned to the works of sin without doubt was to be considered an apostate, although he might seem to hold faith.”||

“Every Catholic,” says Raban Maur, “ought to cultivate all virtues equally, that being nobly adorned within and without, he may be a worthy guest of the Eternal King, and being mounted in the spiritual chariot, may pass on to the everlasting country. He ought to study prudence, he ought to be filled with understanding and justice, to be religious and humble, with fortitude to possess magnanimity, confidence, patience, perseverance, and with temperance, to be clement and moderate; and above all these, he should have peace and charity, which is the bond of perfection.”¶ We have not, therefore, in the preceding book been conversing with airy visions, and unsubstantial reveries, for by the triple hunger and thirst which Bernardine of Sienna distinguishes as that of justice, of grace, and of glory, man gave three things to God, honor to his Creator, love to his Redeemer, and fear to his Judge; three things to himself, purity, watchfulness, and discipline; and three to his brethren, obedience, concord, and beneficence, according to

\*Hom. Lib. IV. in cap. 4 Lucæ.

† Lib. VII. 77.

‡ Isidori Etymolog. I. 3.

§ Third Sund. after Easter.

|| Bibliotheca Chuniacensis, 49.

¶ Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. c. 27.



the social relation in which he was placed towards them.\* It belonged to the wonderful character of Catholicism, in consequence of the eucharistic faith, to unite the interests of the interior, for which the mysteries of the Church provided; and those of the social life, while each of these, perhaps, naturally tended to a separation, and to be satisfied at the expense of the other. This faith, as a modern philosopher remarks, united them indissolubly; for if this mystery, which was itself only an initiation into the mysteries of the future existence, carried the soul beyond the present order, on the other hand, the disposition which was strictly necessary to every one who approached it, was the accomplishment of all the obligations of common life, and particularly of those which one was most disposed to disdain. Extending its vivifying influence to the two extremities of the moral world, it reached at once the most humble duties and ecstasy; and the same actions which made the soul enter into the angelic society, drew it back by the line of justice into the society of men.

In retracing the manners of the Christian Society of past ages, far be it from any disciple of the humble school, to imitate the style of those modern writers, who seem to consider their own personal judgment as an infallible tribunal, by which they may judge as with the balance of Omniscience, the thoughts and deeds of mortals, declaring where fell the just, and when was their fall irreparable.

There is nothing in common, between the Christian philosophy and this pretension to behold human affairs with the same eyes as those of Providence, and to judge them with the calm security of eternal justice,—this high historical optimism, which shows truth and error as merely relative and never absolute,—these sonorous apologies of the victory according to which the present is always in the right, in short, this dramatic development of humanity, of which each act is to be represented in succession.”†

Ah! who are we, to sit in judgment thus to determine what men were guilty, and what innocent, in these ancient times? “*Nullo modo eorum innocentia coronamur, nullo modo eorum iniquitate damnamur,*” as St. Augustin said respecting the Donatists.‡

What is to us the number of the just, or of the unjust, in past ages? It will be sufficient if we can say of all men with truth, in the words of the ancient poet; “*neque quæ recte faciunt culpo, neque quæ delinquant amo.*” And yet with what caution and timidity should even this be uttered! For who is to judge them? The historians of the middle age never presume to explain the troubled course of the world, by tracing the secret sources of disorder, which they knew were often hidden from the eyes even of contemporaries. Pascasius Radbert, in his life of Wala, speaking of the events which attended the dethronement

\* S. Bernardini Senensis, Liv. III. de Beat. Serm.

† De la Philosophie au commencement du XIX siècle.

‡ De Unico bapt. cap. 16.

of the emperor Louis, says, "there is no one who can believe, no one who can conceive, the things that were done, in what way they were done, or how many were done. There is no one who can understand why or how they happened; who were the authors of the evil, or who of the good."\*

Men must wait for that burning day when the Supreme and Omniscient Judge will make inquiry, and will choose them as a man chooses his son who hath served him; and then O man, as a voice from heaven declareth, "*videbitis quid sit inter justum et iniquum, et inter servientem Deo et eum qui non servit ei.*"

Modern historians have never any doubts respecting the secret motives and causes of actions and events. All is unveiled to their eyes. Nothing is left obscure; and as there is more ingenuity required to discover a bad than a virtuous motive, it would be always easy to foresee, before consulting them, what view they would take of actions. Du Fresnoy says, that this alone should lead us to suspect Davilla and Varillas, and esteem their histories but slightly.

Even without weighing the historic difficulty, it is clearly absurd for any men to write as if they were themselves removed to an infinite distance above the wisest and greatest souls that were given to the times which they pass in review. Acute little men, but certainly neither humble nor wise, pass thus like beings of a different order from mortals, through the walks of history, as through those of real life, rashly judging rather from their own preconceived fantasies, than from any calm and cautious scrutiny of things, and then pronounce their sentence with a cool, incomparable assurance, that but ill conceals the fierce and turbulent passions which are often raging beneath the surface. St. Augustine well describes such men, styling them, "*curiosum genus ad cognoscendum vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam.*"†

In proceeding to speak of the admirable fruits of justice which characterized the men of Catholic ages, I am prepared to witness the incredulity of many; for as Nicias said of the Athenians, respecting what had passed in Sicily, I know that the moderns in general will not judge of these things as they really are, and as those know who beheld them, *ἀλλ' ἐξ ὧν ἄν τις εὖ λέγων διαβάλλοι*. It is from whatever may be advanced by any who can speak well, by any vain flashy man declaiming, that they will be convinced.‡

One must be prepared also to witness more than incredulity. Many historical writers resemble those democratic leaders who used to denounce as enemies of the people all who questioned the justice of their particular views. Like Anathagoras the Syracusan, who on the approach of the Athenians being as Thucydides says, the man most credited by the multitude, cried out, "Whoever is of a different opinion, is either not a liberal man, or not a friend to the constitution of the state."§ "This is an age," says Sylvio Pellico, "in which to lie and to mistrust to excess, are things so common, that they are hardly regarded as vices.|| Speak

\* Lib. II. † Confess. Lib. X. cap. 3. ‡ Thucyd. Lib. VII. c. 48. § Id. Lib. VI. 36.  
|| Dei Doveri degli uomini?

with twenty men in private, nineteen will only express their horror against such and such persons. All seem inflamed with indignation against iniquity, as if each alone of all the world were just. To calumniate all the individuals of whom society is composed, with the exception of a few friends, appears to be the universal wish." It is the same with writers of history.

If these insatiable but fickle wanderers were asked, as was the original tempter and calumniator of mankind, whence came they? their reply might be in his words; "circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam." Like the troop described by Æschylus,

εὐμήχανοι  
δὲ καὶ τέλειοι, κακῶν  
τε μνήμονες σεμναί,

they show themselves at every turn ingenious, not forgetful of evils, and so pass on through regions which their breath has withered, to exercise their inglorious dishonored office, insensible to mortal interests, and alienated from heaven.\* The old Roman historian expresses always a reluctance to credit a narrative of turpitude, saying, "non libet crederi."† But nothing seems to give such pleasure to our historians, who pretend to represent the middle age, as the discovery of some deed of atrocity, in an ancient chronicle, though indeed they need it not; for with them no might, nor greatness in morality can censure'scape: "back-wounding calumny, the whitest virtue strikes." Their charges are general, and for that reason alone, their testimony would have been rejected by Socrates, who used always to say, οὐ ζητῶ πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον.‡ In fact, they have praise for no one. "He rides tolerably well, but what is it to a Hippocentaur?" Thus they introduce into history, what Pasquier styles the Sçavoir courtisan, far more dangerous than the pedantic knowledge, for this consists in seeking the reputation of ability, by never giving praise to any object, however excellent, by refusing admiration; always having some defect to condemn, either in the style, or conduct, or choice, or motive, of the actions; or if it be impossible to do so by significant gestures, that others may believe there is still something wrong.§

Novalis judges better of the office of an historian, saying, "When I think upon the general right, it appears to me, that an historian ought necessarily to be a poet; for it is a poet alone who can understand how to connect events together properly. In their narratives, I have remarked with calm delight, the tender feeling which is evinced for the mysterious spirit of life. There is more truth in their relations than in learned histories. Although their personages and events are invented, yet the sense in which they are conceived is true to nature."

Whoever approaches modern history, with a sincere wish to avoid error, must bear in mind that it is a domain which hath been for three hundred years constantly infested with false guides, who, from different motives, were all equally disposed

\* Eumenid. 381. † Livy IV. 29. ‡ Plato Protagoras. § Lettres de Pasquier, Liv. X. 7.



to lead men astray, by calumniating the manners of the ancient Catholic civilization. In the first rank came the rash judging proselytes of the new religions, who sought to justify their separation, by denouncing the number of the reprobate, as if their reform was to extend even to what had been determined by heaven. "They behold," says Louis of Blois, "a great heap of straw in the Lord's granary, from which they judge that there is no grain amidst it." *Paleas vident, grana non vident, vel videre nolunt.*\* After these came the Rationalists; and it is a curious and just remark of Bonald, that the same doctrines which deny the original corruption of man, always exaggerate his social corruption.† In fine, the atheists and hypocrites laid the most dangerous snares of all, for being animated with an immortal hatred against Catholicism, they formed a diabolic school, which had its secret traditions, by means of which they were most skilled in all the cunning wiles of deception. These were the men who interrogated history with so much the greater severity, as their deductions and admonitions proceeded from a source different from charity. What is this cry from the broad way trodden by them who are not true to God or to themselves, which yet sounds like the voice that in the days of Damian, came from the desert? In the ages of faith, it would have deceived no one. Ives de Chartres was told by some calumnious persons, that the manners of the monks in his diocese were corrupt; but that holy and acute bishop, after hearing their testimony, came to the conclusion, that they were not to be believed; "*quibus non est credendum de aliena injustitia, quamdiu non disceserint a sua.*"‡

Severe and unforgiving men, do you not fear to have some searching questions addressed in turn to yourselves? You do, indeed, reprove with indignation, the crimes, real or imputed, of the ancient Christian society. You proclaim many things respecting abuse, superstition, and hypocrisy which might have been, and which very often were delivered by a Bernard, or a Gregory. But whence to you this zeal? The moral discourse which the creature, eminent in beauty once, addresses to our Saviour, in the immortal poem of *Paradise Regained*, is sufficient to undeceive us with regard to such professions. Yours is an old comedy.

*Claudius accusat mœchos, Catilina Cethegum.*

The world, which once heard a Grachus inveigh against sedition, will hardly be convinced that it has entered upon a new epoch, by hearing a Pedro of Brazil accuse the monastic orders of having degenerated from their original sanctity. Sooth, it is paying a poor compliment to the sagacity of modern times, when these writers, in which France and even Spain have lately been so prolific, expect their readers to believe that an attachment to the manners of the ancient Catholic civilization, is synonymous with robust profligacy in every form. The weak credulity with which such compositions are received, presents no unprecedented phenomenon;

\* Ludovic, Blois. *Epist. ad Florentium.* † Du Divorce. ‡ Ivonis Carnot. *Epist. CX.*

nor is even the artful nature of their calumny due to any progress in the science of deception. In protestations of regard for justice and morality the pagan oracles were equally loud; in allusion to which St. Augustin said, "the malignity of demons, unless it transformed itself into an angel of light could not have fulfilled its object."\* Indeed, there is no great difficulty here; for when disposed to triumph in their own social progress, they turn round with exultation to display, not the obedience and charity, the filial love, fidelity, and honor of their contemporaries, but the different signs, real or imagined, of commercial prosperity, national glory, and of a wondrous material civilization, the goodness of their manufactures, goodness of their laws, goodness of their police, goodness of their prisons perhaps, "as if," to use the words of St. Augustin, "it were the greatest good of man to have all things good excepting himself."†

"The eyes of perverse men meet with scandals every where, but," says an ancient ascetic, "the good man enjoys tranquillity and repose." Who can be deceived as to the cause which troubles the repose of these modern writers, so shocked at the profligacy of the middle ages, when, in order to prove it, we find them furnishing out their pages with the most detestable pictures, and adopting a style which cannot be reconciled with a very tender solicitude for the virtues of their own time? No, let them be ingenious, let them compose books that may indicate ever such extensive, such multifarious research, still, when all is done, when they have displayed before us all the regions of the bad, their evidence must be rejected as partial, and their judgment as untrue. Without doubt it is an easy task from the class of facetious writers, from the author of the *Fabliaux*, from the troubadours, and the poets who favored the religious innovators, to draw a picture of the middle ages most inviting to a licentious imagination, and favorable to the conclusions of those who advocated the overthrow of the ancient society; but where philosophy is heard, collections of this kind cannot be received as evidence, and, therefore, with such researches we need have nothing to do. I shall follow Plato's rule, *καὶ τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἀνόσιον οὔτε παρίεμαι ἔγωγε, οὔτε λέγω πολλοῖς γὰρ καὶ ἄλλοις ὑμνεῖν ταῦτα ἐπιμεγές, καὶ εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα μελήσει χρόνον.*"‡

Nevertheless, to these historic walks, reader, come not expecting to be led through a region of pure serenity, unclouded and untroubled. "Good with bad expect to hear;" supernal grace contending with sinfulness of men. "We do not," says St. Clemens Alexandrinus, "receive simply all philosophy, but that concerning which Socrates speaks in Plato; for there are, as they say, round the mysteries, many rod-bearers, but few Bacchanals, πολλοὶ μὲν ναρθηκοφόροι, Βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι, obscurely signifying that many are called but few chosen."§

"In all places and times of the saints," says Thomas à Kempis, 'there have

\* De Civitat. Dei, Lib. II. 26. † Ib. Lib. III. 1. ‡ Epist VII. § Stomat. Lib. I. c. 19.

been good and evil, faithful and incredulous, devout and dissolute, benevolent and perverse, spiritual and carnal; and the good by their patience advanced daily to greater good, and the evil, like smoke, evanesced in the malice of their own desires.”\*

It is from the heights of this ascetic philosophy that we should survey the various ages of the world, rather than from any ground, however agreeable, of historic theory, which can never be perfectly solid, since it fails, even under the genius of that illustrious Catholic historian, of whose view some Protestant writers have availed themselves, in contrasting what they represent as the manners of the primitive times with those of the middle ages. What skills it to declaim about primitive times, when we find St. Paul telling the Corinthians that there are vices among them which are not even among the Pagans; and when we can read the account which St. Cyprian gives of the manners of a Christian society in his age?

“Recollect,” says Benedict Aretino, “how many heretics endeavored to stain the tunic of Christ in early times, and what corruption of manners arose from the Donatists, Manichæans, Priscilianists, and other monsters of that kind, from which the Church, during the middle ages, was in great measure free. What evil men, were opposed to Athanasius, Basil, and Chrysostom? If the multitude of martyrs was great, there were many also who through fear or ambition denied Christ and returned to idolatry. On the other hand, if you will look at the history of the last 400 years, you will find in the first place, those two great lights, than which none ever shone with greater lustre or sanctity, Francis and Dominick, from whom such institutions arose as antiquity had never seen, producing an incredible multitude of saints and of illustrious men, by whom the Christian faith has been so much aided, that men have learned to live in a manner far more Christian than before; for many vices in the world have been by their means either diminished or wholly extirpated.”†

The language of the primitive fathers will never sanction an exclusive admiration for their times. “It is certain, brethren,” says St. Augustin, “that all we who are in the body of the Lord, and who remain in him, that he also may remain in us, must of necessity in this world until the end live amidst the wicked. I do not say amidst those wicked who blaspheme Christ, for it is rare now to find any one with their tongue blaspheme him, but there are many who do so in their lives. Of necessity, therefore, amongst such men we must live, even until the end.”‡

St. Augustin was obliged to warn the catechumens against being scandalized by the lives of unworthy Christians, in words which would well become the Catholic missionary of the present day, addressing his separated brethren, who might well

\* Serm. I. Part 5.

† Bened. Accolti Aretini de Præstantia virorum sui ævi dialog. Thesaur. Antiq. Italia. tom. IX.

‡ St. August. Tract. in Joan. 27.



warn the illustrious Protestant from being unwilling to be in the Church where they are, or from wishing to be there such as they are.\* “Let not the vain Pagans,” saith he, “deceive you, or the false Jews, or the deceitful heretics, ‘nec non in ipsa Catholica mali Christiani, tanto nocentiores quanto interiores inimici.’† You, therefore, believing these things, beware of temptations, lest that enemy should deceive you, not only by means of those who are without the Church, whether Pagans, or Jews, or heretics, but also by those whom you may behold living ill within the Catholic Church; that you may not imitate those who are either abandoned to luxurious and shameful pleasures, or addicted to vain and illicit curiosity, whether of theatrical exhibitions, or of remedies, or of diabolic divinations, or engaged in pomp and avarice, and pride, or in any life which the law condemns and punishes. You must not suppose that these perverse men, although they enter the walls of the church, will hereafter enter the kingdom of heaven, because at the proper time they will be separated, if they do not previously separate themselves from the evil.”‡

The middle ages were ages of crime, and in that respect they form no singular epoch in the world’s history; but mark, it was crime, along with infinite pity, infinite horror for sin, and infinite desire of justice; and on this side what parallel to them can we find in human annals? Amidst social disorders what multitudes were obeying the call to perfection, and at the voice of the preacher leaving all to follow Christ! There were wars and crimes in abundance, of which I shall hereafter speak, but luxury, more cruel than arms, did not avenge the wrongs of the oppressed. Assuredly, there are names belonging to our ancient history of horrible dispraise, recalling the deeds of men upon whom the multiplied villanies of nature did swarm, men possessed by seven demons that drank iniquity like water. Each generation had sad experience of all malicious acts abhorred in heaven; but on all sides what cries of horror,

*ὡς δίκαια, ὡς θρόνοι τ' ἐπινυνύων;*

what a profound sense of injustice!

“Iniquitatem odio habui et abominatus sum!”

what innocence, goodness, sanctity, and wisdom: “custodivit anima mea testimonia tua: et dilexit ea vehementer!” What a minority, to use a modern phrase, opposed to the wretched, godless crew!§ Instead, too, of imitating the malice of our adversary, and gathering evil from good, misconstruing or abusing it, men in those times gathered good out of the gross and palpable evil which existed around them. “I confess,” says Muratori, “that when young, I was of the opinion of those admirers of ancient Greece and Rome who thought that there was nothing but horror and barbarism in the history of the middle ages. I need not say how

\* St. August. de Catechizandis rudibus.

† St. August. de Catechiz. rudibus.

‡ Id. De fide rerum quæ non videntur

§ Mabill. Præfat. in V. S. Benedict, s. I.

completely I had to free my mind from that error. In these ages which are stigmatized by so many, there were not wanting admirable princes, and great examples of fortitude, sanctity, and other virtues. There are many reasons why we should embrace and love the history of Europe from the decline of the Roman empire till the sixteenth century.”\*

“You speak of the evils of these times, but I maintain,” says Benedict Aretino, “without fear of being misled, that crimes were not practised openly as in the ancient world, nor so frequently; that there were many nations by whom they were held in horror, and that almost all who professed the religion of Christ were more timid to do wrong; so that I am astonished how any man of learning can assert, without blushing, that he prefers the ancient civilization to that of the middle ages.”†

Our ancient writers remark the importance of producing in history things reprehensible, as well as those worthy of praise.‡ That the crimes of the unjust were often designedly, and almost with affectation, brought into prominent relief for the instruction of men, is a fact that can be witnessed even in the wild fabling of chivalrous romance, which furnished, in many respects, a true picture of contemporaneous manners. Thus we find a lady saying to a knight in Gyron le Courtois, “Certes, you speak not as a knight errant, but as a villain and envious knight, and I doubt not you are as vile in deeds as you are in words! and sooth for your villany I am greatly desirous to know you: for as one desires to know men of honor and virtue on account of their goodness, so in like manner, one desires to know bad men on account of their wickedness, that one may know where one ought to shun them.”§

What is it that demands tears from the just and thoughtful, that desolates the heart, and leaves it almost without strength or hope? It is not the crimes of the wicked—it is not the persecution of the Church, of which the world and the Christian society have been always accustomed. It is, if it be not a solecism to utter such a sentence, the assent of the good. Cædipus of Colonna declares that “he knows no just man who praises and defends all causes alike;” || but for what degree or form of injustice have not the moderns invented an excuse, and where shall one find a head that is not crammed with all the sophisms which England, France, and Germany have produced during forty years? It is the men who come forward as the just, and find a thousand reasons for absolving their persecutors. None are so sure of being left defenceless as the innocent and holy. The Poet says in general of this earthly world, that “here to do harm is often laudable: to do good sometimes accounted dangerous folly.” What would he have said had he seen later times? In the general movement and agitation of

\* In *Scriptores rer. Italic. Præfat.*

† *De præstantia virorum sui ævi dialog.* Thesaur. antiq. Italiæ. IX.

‡ *Wadding an. Ann. Epist. ad lector.*

§ *Ed. cf. XXII.*

| V. 748.

minds individual reason seems to have lost its power of distinguishing in morals, as if the tree of knowledge, for which we gave up all, had lost its ancient virtue. Amidst the general wreck of intelligences, the very sense of justice seems to have perished. Every thing innocent in humanity, and noble in the poesy of heroes—every thing that was formerly of good report, and enshrined in the hearts of men and women with universal veneration, is now, as if by common consent, pronounced to be either a superstition, or a false principle, or a matter of indifference, perhaps even of scorn; and no longer for the children of perdition, but for the just, dishonored in their own eyes by witnessing to what degradation their moral nature is subjected, seems reserved the crimson brow. This is what the sinful nations, the people laden with iniquity, have come to, for having forsaken the Lord, and blasphemed the Holy One of Israel.

In the middle ages, which men stigmatize as barbarous, an act of injustice or dishonor was regarded with a feeling of abhorrence which could not be uttered. The disdainful and hardly translatable expression of Æschylus, *κατάπυστος*, “a thing to be spit upon,” is the only word that can convey any idea of the intensity of that indignation.\* Nothing seemed more admirable to Marsilius Ficinus in the character of Lorenzo de Medicis than this horror which he always evinced of bad men.† On the other hand, the joy inspired by just deeds, and by beholding the sweet and gracious order of holy institutions, gave birth to rapturous strains, which indicated an habitual and almost angelic felicity. To speak of justice, and to recount high deeds of virtue, every one sought, whether in grave and solemn history, or in fabulous and poetic symbol, and since the draught is grateful ever as their thirst is keen, no words may speak the fulness of content. Religion, and chivalry inspired by religion, existed amidst all the disorders of the worst part of society.

“It is precisely this contrast,” says a modern historian, “which constitutes the great characteristic of the middle ages. Contemplate the heroic times of all other societies, and you find no trace of a similar contradiction. The practice and the theory of manners are nearly conformable. It is not seen that the ideas of men were purer or more elevated than their daily actions. The heroes of Homer have no scruples or sorrow for their brutality and egotism. Their moral sense is not better than their conduct. It is the same every where else excepting in our middle ages. Their crimes and disorders abound, and men have evidently in their minds and imaginations lofty and pure desires and ideas. Principles were better than actions. Their notions of virtue are much more developed, their ideas of justice incomparably better than what is practised around them, or than what they often practise themselves. A certain moral idea soars above this stormy society, and draws the attention and respect of men. Christianity, no doubt,” he adds, “was the cause of this fact, which is, at all events, unquestionable. It

\* Eumenid. 68.

† Epist. Lib. VI.



presents itself every where in studying the middle ages ; in the popular poetry, as well as in the exhortations of the priests. Throughout, the moral understanding of men rises and aspires far above their lives." \*

Let it be observed, that in ages of faith crime assumes a still darker and more diabolic form, at least in the imagination, than in times when the supernatural grace and light have been withdrawn. The vicious, like scorpions, when the sun darts its brightest flames, are most inflamed with the poison of their malignity when the sun of justice most serenely shines. It is only after knowing the perfect good, that men can know absolute evil ; in point of fact, indeed, a countenance of Judas would probably be found in the vicious quarters of London or Berlin sooner than in the Borghetto at Milan, where Leonardo da Vinci went every morning and evening, for more than a year, in search of one, without success ; but in the order of conception, it is different, and therefore the Don Juan of Lord Byron is but a poor scholar of Moliere's Don Juan, a mere boyish libertine. The Spanish Don Juan, as Moliere paints him, was a grand Catholic conception, which a mind not initiated in the mysteries of faith, or narrowed by the modern philosophy, can scarcely comprehend. In an age of faith, impiety and injustice, as we have remarked, inspire a kind of terror and astonishment which we find in those serious comedies of the middle age. In our times they only furnish episodes in the style of Fielding, of which the heroes seem poor silly youths—poor masks wishing to play Satan's part, and yet whose simple humanity appears constantly under their infernal costume.

"Again," as Bonald observes, "in Christian ages and nations, amongst the acceptable people, followers of good works, nothing is remarked by repining and censorious minds but vices, because virtues are its ordinary state and alone authorized, in the same manner as classical enthusiasts remark nothing but virtues in the pagans, because with them vice was the common state, and permitted by the laws." In times of general corruption, every one is said to be just—"all are honorable men." In ages of spiritual illumination, the secular poet will pursue the saintly lamentation, and say,

———"The just are few in number ;  
But they neglected ; avarice, envy, pride,  
Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of all  
On fire."†

Hear Richard of St. Victor commenting on the Divine words, "Omne caput languidum, et omne cor moerens ;" "the Lord knows his work ; nor can the greatness or multiplicity of its diseases escape the Chief Physician. Behold, he tells you in these words what is the excess of the disease—infirmity from within, and wounds from without ; and to crown all, a contempt for the remedy ; 'Non est,' he adds, 'circumligata nec curata medicamine, neque fota oleo.' Behold our evils

\* Guizot, Cours d'Hist. IV. 6.

† Dante Infer.

Learn, then, O man, and if thou disdainest to be taught by man, learn at least from him who teaches man knowledge ; learn, I say, the extent of your evils, and of your misery ; for by these exterior, you are warned to correct your interior maladies ; to know that you are weak in will, weak in affection, weak in action.”\* Moreover in the middle ages the vices opposed to the Christian religion were open and avowed, and therefore less dangerous to the intellectual than to the material interests of society. History and poetry professed then to tell of good deeds and their opposite, between which the line of demarcation was broad. There were not professions and employments sanctioned by the custom of society, and supposed to be honorable because profitable, which required in those who pursued them the very opposite qualities from those which belong to the Christian life, though they may be consistent with the morality and honor of those who are in sight of heaven reprobate. What are now examples were then crimes. A calumniator, a detractor, was not concealed to himself as to others by having the conduct of a journal. A lover of discord and opposition, and an accuser, was not presentable among Christians under the name of a public speaker. A hater of all religious and social institutions under the influence of Catholicism, was not honored as a liberal statesman, who conceded to the times what was just. A despiser of God and the celestial life was not regarded as a man of practical abilities, and enlightened philosophy. In short, what remarkably distinguishes the middle ages from later times, was the impossibility of any one proceeding by degrees from step to step in the employment and cultivation of dispositions all deemed sufficiently honest by society, until at length unawares he found himself placed in a situation in which it would be impossible for him to discharge the essential duties imposed upon all who desired to be real and living members of the Christian church.

In ages of faith, as in Catholic nations at present, the manners of some persons became corrupt. A youth of noble and generous nature, might be deceived in the way of which Solomon bid him beware. But in latter times, and in the northern nations, the very rule of manners and laws became corrupt, and nature's frailty was depraved, not only into an art, but into a system of philosophy. In the former, disorders were personal, and sought the shade ; in the later, they were published and authorized ; and while the profligate Italian laid his dark scheme to seduce his neighbor's wife, the grave and formal German carried her off in virtue of a judicial sentence, and married her before a notary.†

Travellers have remarked, with Bourgoign, that the external decency of manners at Madrid was such, that the most shameful pleasures were obliged to assume a veil of mystery. The public opinion, as well as the police allowing of nothing to offend the eye, or endanger the imagination.‡ In fact, the error of the phi-

\*Richardi S. Victoris de statu interioris hominis. Pars I. Tract. I. c. I.

† Bonald du Divorce.

‡ Vol. II. 353.

losophic sin, beyond the sphere of secret societies, is the error of a much later period, constituting this last heresy, which now desolates the earth. Abailard loudly protested that he had never conceived or uttered such a blasphemy;\* and certainly no trace of it is found in his writings.

With respect to the professed satirists and censors of the middle age, I would say, "To know of some is well, but of the rest silence may best beseem."

There are things, as a writer of the middle ages observes, which it is better to pass over in silence, than to handle, lest the enemy should inject their defilement into the secret recesses of the mind.†

The first reflection suggested by the *Fabliaux* is undoubtedly sad. *Le-grand-d'Aussy*, concludes at once from their gross and licentious expressions, that in these ages the corruption of manners was at its height, under the sanction of religion. An historian is, however, not so quick in his conclusions. At all times he is aware that there have been vices, and that the age of the troubadours and minstrels was not exempt from this sad law of humanity. But the question is, Did the *Fabliaux*, and the tales of poets, express accurately the society of these times? The authors of these *Fabliaux* were people greedy of gain, who went from town to town courting the favor of the frivolous and profligate; and as priests are obliged to give an example of purity of life, it is not wonderful that the malignity of such persons should be exerted in ascribing parts to them which were inconsistent with virtue. It has been said lately that the *Fabliaux* expressed the party of the opposition of those times: but a distinction should be made here. The licentious poets of the twelfth century never dreamt that their songs could injure either the Church or the State. They made a bad history of a bad monk, because the contrast was amusing, since that order of men were generally followers of perfection. But you will not find a word to warrant our supposing that they attacked the monastic spirit. The Church was sacred to them; they had faith; but their satiric vein must have vent and they bring a monk on the stage without the least idea that religion will lose any thing. *Tartuffe* would then in some respects have been an innocent comedy; for as *Laurentie* observes, "it is necessary to pass through the modern civilization, to fancy that the unmasking of hypocrisy can be a satire upon religion."‡ That these men were actuated by a thirst for justice, in making their representations of the society around them is a modern discovery: as in the fifteenth century, the men who stood most in need of reform were probably those who cried out loudest for reformation.

Dante meets one of the troubadours in purgatory. It was the elegant *Sordello*; and he places another in hell, the warlike *Bertram de Born*, whom he represents as a bloody and headless trunk, walking with his head in his hands. *Robert de Mardarolles* confesses that he composed his amorous songs, merely because it was

\* In *Apol.* ad fid.

† *Thom. a Kempis, Epistolæ I.*

‡ *Bibliothèque choisie, Recueil de Fabliaux, introduct.*



the custom of poets ; and Pierre de Craon declares that his was an hereditary taste, his family, from father to son, having always made them. One of these old satirists, who railed against every order, not respecting any class, or any individual, however venerable, who visited the monasteries of Clairvaux, and Cluni, for the sole purpose of searching out matter to furnish out his satirical poems has the good sense and candor to confess that he does not believe that any one will give attention or credit to what he writes.

“ Parce qu’ils ont vu que j’aimoye  
Plus que nul beau soulas et joye  
Et que j’avois aussi grand métier  
Comme nul de moi prêchier.”\*

Nor is it so certain, after all, that these calumnious wanderers met with great encouragement. The old Trouvère says in the preface to the romance of the Dame de Fayel, and the Sire de Coucy, that poets or trouvères are laughed at by some people, who say, “qu’il a mal trouvé lui qui n’a pu trouver un logis.” It does not reflect discredit on the age, when these men, so greedy of money, complain that theirs is a bad profession, and that one may die of hunger, though ever so well provided with scandalous and licentious tales. The jongleurs of the present day have no such complaint to make. Besides, it is a fact, that the works were estimated at the time according to their merits, and denounced accordingly. Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, endeavored to have the romance of the Rose declared to be heretical ; and alluding to the judgment passed on Ovid’s books, by Augustus, he exclaims, “O heavens ! amongst pagans a pagan judge condemns a pagan who wrote a doctrine which enticed men to vain love ; and amongst Christians such a work is supported, and praised, and defended.” For this declamation of the moralist, we must make allowance ; for the fact was not so. Although that romance was tolerated by some, in consequence of the virtuous interpretations put upon the objectionable passages, yet we find Christine de Pisan, all of whose works breathe so pure and lofty a morality, denouncing it as infamous in her epistles ; and saying to her son,

“ Si tu veulx et chastement vivre,  
De la Rose ne lis le livre,  
Ne Ovide de l’ Art d’Amer  
Dont l’exemple sert a blasmer.”

She added, in a prose epistle to Goutier Col, who had undertaken to defend Jehan de Meun, that the romance of the Rose was “une exhortatione de très abominables mœurs, et confortoit la vie dissolue.”

The ancient councils, as well as that of Trent, had expressly forbidden the reading of all such books as were calculated to corrupt the manners of men ; and

\*L’Abbé Massieu Hist. de la Poésie Française, 129.

it even became a general opinion that such books as the *Decameron* of Boccaccio were essentially heretical, and therefore, on grounds of faith, could not be read by any Catholic who adhered to his profession. Men of the reformed philosophy, while purchasing its early editions at their weight in gold, and multiplying them in a cheap form for the people, were speaking of "the superstition" of those still faithful to the ancient manners, who, on discovering a packet of manuscripts in the house in which Boccaccio had inhabited, immediately committed it to the flames.\* Under the influence of the Catholic religion, we find princes and noblemen, and philosophers of the lay society, whose names will be for ever associated with the learning of the ancients, speaking with the greatest horror of the classic poets, on account of their obscenity. "What more detestable," cries Francis Picus, of Mirandula, "than the turpitude of the ancient poets, which should be wholly removed and extirpated from a Christian. I honor and love Christian poets, such as Prudentius, Sedulius, Damasus, and in our age, Baptist the Carmelite, that other hope of Mantua, Ludovicus Pictorius of Ferrara, Ugolinus Verinus of Florence, and many others."†

It might be questioned whether any scholars in modern times are inspired with the same enthusiasm for the ancient learning, though certainly no one appears to regard with the same suspicion its moral tendency. One can understand how men like the poet Belleau, who always kept company with the profane, on first hearing the peculiar phraseology of the religious innovators, might naturally suppose that what distinguished them was a religious tone of conversation; but this very error seems like a punishment for their former lives, for had they not before associated exclusively with the profane, they would never have thought chastity of language a mark by which they could detect a Huguenot.‡ The fact is, that by far the greatest number of the licentious poets of a later period, either avowedly or secretly favored the religious innovators and, indeed, were themselves important agents in bringing about that revolution. There is not a little connection between the gross licentiousness of Chaucer and the looseness of his faith. No one need be told after what kind of justice the early innovators thirsted, when they pillaged shrines, and sought nuns in marriage. Manners, however corrupt, did not interfere with the new character which they assumed, and the old man which they threw off, was not exactly that condemned in the Gospel.

Harrington, the translator of Ariosto, the courtier and godson of Queen Elizabeth, to whom he dedicated his work, so infamously gross, was nevertheless the object of the highest admiration with the English of that age. Buchanan was another of these reform-preaching poets, whose verses were often indecent. Clement Marot was abandoned to the vilest licentiousness, while translating the Psalms. John Bouchet, unmasking the vice and hypocrisy of the innovators, expresses the deepest

\* Blume, *Iter Italicum*, II. 90.      † De Studeo div. et hum. Philosophiæ, Lib. I. cap. 6.

‡ Gouget, *Bibliothèque Française*, tom. XII. 296.

regret that this man should have so fallen by heretical presumption, seeing that "he was a true poet born." The mocking satires from the shop of Rabelais, were certainly not indicative of the pure and blessed thirst. Des Perieres contributed, at the same time, to the Queen of Navarre's novels and to the hymns of the Huguenots. We must except, indeed, Grevin, who published a satire upon Pierre Ronsard, for having condemned the innovators in his "*Discours des Misères du Tems*," and yet Grevin published many pieces of gallantry little in accordance with the character of a reformer of religion. Even one of the ministers, the Sieur de Mont-Dieu, has the equity to blame Theodore Beza for the amorous fantasies which he formed, and which so enchanted him that they broke forth in his verses.\* As for the objects of their calumny, it should be remembered that those immoral censors who attacked the clergy, like Jacquemart, Gelée, and a thousand others, are equally severe upon all other classes of men, upon magistrates, nobles and kings; and, besides, what can any historian infer from the clergy having been insulted in a treatise on the art of love? These severe satirists of the monks, were also distinguished by being the bitter calumniators of the female sex, and that is another reason why their whole testimony should be altogether rejected. John de Meun does not believe that there is one virtuous woman in the world.

"Prudes femmes, par Saint Denis  
Autant en est que de Phenix."

Lines, methinks, which it would be difficult to match for their absurdity, blasphemy, and falsehood. Nay, he affirms that there never was, and that there never will be a virtuous and chaste woman. After this, it is pleasant to hear him lash the vices of his age, moralizing and accusing the monks, and arguing thus:

"Tel a robe Religieuse  
Donques il est Religieux!  
Cet argument est vitieux,"

I am aware, indeed, that it is not sufficient to reveal the infamy of such men, in order to be justified in rejecting in general the testimony of the satirists and censors of the ancient Christian society. Fools may speak wisely, what wise men do foolishly; and St. Augustin proposeth the question, "How doth an unjust man praise and blame rightly, many things in the manners of other men? By what rules does he judge? Where are those rules written, unless in the book of that light which is called truth?"† "That book of light," says Duns Scotus, "is the divine Intelligence; and in that light the unjust man sees what things are done justly, igitur in illa luce videmus à qua imprimitur in cor hominis, justitia illa autem est lux increata."‡

From such questions and sentences we may infer that the great masters of the

\* Gouget, Bibliothèque Française, tom. XII. 236.

† S. August. de Trin. XIV. 15.

‡ Duns Scoti, Lib. I. Sent. Dist. III. 9. 4.



middle ages, would have sanctioned the rejection of no evidence, on any ground but that of its intrinsic worthlessness. The existence of such writers, however, is not sufficient proof to justify the modern opinion respecting the state of morality in their time. It was in the reign of St. Louis that the great founders of the immoral satiric school flourished, who, like Richard de l'Ile, Courtois d'Arras, Garin, Haisiaux, Huon le Roi, and Courte-Barbe, supplied, in subsequent times, Boccacio, Villon, and Rabelais, with some of their worst passages. The Abbé Massieu says, "It is a surprising thing, that there should have never been in France more poets of gallantry, nay, more licentious and immoral poets, than during the reign of the holiest of our kings. Neither the example of the prince, nor the regulations of his kingdom against immorality and disorder, were able to restrain the poets within the bounds of their duty."\* To a reflecting mind, on the contrary, nothing is less surprising than the phenomena to which he appeals. It is perfectly in the order of nature, that ages of eminent holiness should be prolific in writers of this description.

It was no novelty to the Christian Church to be presented with such facts. St. Jerome complained of his age, that frivolous authors were most read, and that many preferred the Milesian fables to the books of Plato.†

Yet on the other hand, if these books intended for the amusement of the feudal hall be compared with the compositions which correspond to them in the ancient literature of the Gentiles, or in the modern society, no one, I think, will be tempted to bring them forward in evidence of a peculiar corruption of manners in the middle ages. We can trace no resemblance in them to the calumnious libels which were formerly denounced by human as well as by divine decrees—the Roman law condemning all who wrote or read them, and the Christian emperors publishing many ordinances to the same effect. Certainly many of the chivalrous romances contain objectionable passages, which appear the more dangerous, if we consider what St. Jerome saith, "*venena non dantur nisi melle circumlita, et vitia non decipiunt nisi sub specie umbraque virtutum.*" But yet they indicate no systematic plan to falsify the principles of human conduct, or to reverse the Christian type. They do not appear in the rank of an organized and determined opposition to the spirit and law of the Catholic religion. If the romantic writers contributed to create a taste for all that is wonderful and wild, it must on the other hand be acknowledged that theirs was often a most discreet madness; and, after all, the ancient sage who first reduced poetry to art, would not teach us, on that account, to despise them: *τὸ δὲ θαυμαστὸν ἥδὲ*, is the saying of Aristotle.‡ Speaking of Guillaume de Lorry and Jean de Mehun, Stephen Pasquier says, "Whether you consider their soft sentences, or their beautiful imagery, I would oppose them to all the Italian poets. Do you seek natural or moral philosophy? You find them

\* Hist. de la Poésie Française, 172.

† Hieronymi Lib. I. Epist. 3, ad Eustachum.

‡ Poet. 24.

there. Do you desire wise traits? Do you wish folly? You will find them both there in abundance—traits of folly from which you can learn to be wise. Not even in theology do they seem to be apprentices; and since their time, some have been in great vogue who were enriched with their plumes without confessing it.”\* Pindar complains that “fables embellished with various false beauties, *ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον*, have perhaps deceived the minds of mortals, and poesy, which renders all things sweet to men, superinducing honor, may have often rendered credible what is incredible.”† But the moralist judges less severely, and with Novalis says that “it is the poet alone who deserves the name of sage.” Certainly the lay of the minstrel, or the romance of the knightly penman, has often inspired heroism, devoted affection, and thoughts allied with justice, in youthful breasts. Call these authors, if you will, vain, but do not affect to be more severe than St. Jerome, who styles Homer “dulcissime vanus.” You cannot, at least, accuse them of heavy lightness, serious vanity, while of many you might truly affirm that they are pleasant without scurrility, audacious without impudence, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy. What profound views of Providence and the mystery of life in that beautiful fabliaux of the hermit whom an angel leads through the world! What a moral lesson in the destruction of the boy, who, dying in innocence, is received among the angels, while his father returns to that course of charity from which he had been withdrawn by an over solicitude to make a provision for him; and thus both are eventually saved, whereas otherwise both would have been forever lost! This admirable fable, which Parnel translated, and partially disfigured, to render it conformable to the prejudices of his sect, occurs in the *Doctrinal de Sapience*,‡ composed in the year 1388, by Gui de Roye, Archbishop of Sens. How easy is it again to detect the spirit of Catholicism in the tenderness and delicacy of the passage in the *Inferno*,

“That day we read no more;”

so universally admired, and yet to which many parallels might be found in the writings of the middle ages, which were intended to amuse the leisure of the bower and hall. If all this be false, still we must grant that it is what Plato calls “lying well;” whereas the man of that new lay the inventor, which begins with

“I want a hero, an uncommon want,”

and generally the writers who have succeeded the ancient Catholic poets in that walk, by traducing the noble worthies of history, and levelling all views of human life, not merely lie, but lie *οὐ καλῶς*, as Plato says; publishing things, also, which if ever so true, the ancient moralists would have consigned to silence, or would have only discussed and examined in solemn conclave, before as few

\* *Recherches de la France*, liv. VII. 3.

† *Olymp. I.*

‡ *Doctrinale Sapientię*.

and as select hearers as possible.\* “Never would we permit poets,” says Socrates, in a memorable passage, “to persuade our people that Achilles, being the son of a goddess, and of Peleus, the wisest of men, and the third from Jove, and educated by the most wise Chiron, was full of such confusion that he could have within himself two diseases contrary to each other *ἀνελευθερίαν μετὰ φιλοχρηματίας. καὶ αὖ ὑπερηφανίαν θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων*. We ought not to suffer them to say such things, nor try to persuade the young, *ὥς οἱ ἥρωες ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲν βελτίους, ὅπερ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἐλέγομεν, οὔθ’ οἷα ταῦτα οὔτ’ ἀληθῆ.*”† We have, in these remarkable words of Plato, an exact description of our modern popular literature, which is neither holy nor true. It was given, indeed, to Byron to draw fine tones from an anti-poetic chord in the human heart; but his imitators among a God-forsaken people have had reason to repent their choice in attempting to follow him. What made poets of old was faith, divine, infinite in its desires, in its sighs and raptures; human faith also, which believes in the affections of man, in hope, in hospitality, in patriotism—Christian faith, which purifies all, which sanctifies all, which defies all.

With respect to the censure due to the ancient romances of chivalry, it would be great injustice not to make many distinctions, and acknowledge the many extenuating features which belong to them. A modern writer of that class who speak of “the venerable chroniclers,” of the middle ages, when they wish to show that they were men who had no sense of justice or mercy, says, that “while the heroes of the round table are sent in the most devout spirit to search for the Sangreal, we find them recreating themselves from their toils by the most depraved pleasures;” he neglects to inform his reader, in conclusion, that no knight can win the prize, but one who has the purity of an angel, and that one is found, Sir Perceval, who succeeds in the quest. But even without investigation, methinks had these ideal characters been exactly such as this writer represents, Dante who knew them so well, when he had heard his sage instructor name those dames and knights of antique days, as being among the spirits for ever lost, would never have added, that “overpowered by pity, well nigh in amaze, his mind was lost.”‡ In general these ancient books are judged from the paraphrases of modern French writers like the Count of Caylus, and how they must have disfigured the old chivalrous romances may be well conceived, when one observes that in their versified translations of Theocritus they have contrived to obliterate, even in him, some expressions of the modesty of nature. Milton says that “the lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood, proved to him, by the price which they set upon chastity, so many incitements to the love and steadfast observation of that virtue.”§

Would you observe what penitence, what a sense of the baseness of sin, occa-

\* Plato de Repub. Lib. II.

† Hell. 5.

‡ Plato de Repub. Lib. III.

§ An Apology for Smectymnuus.



sionally breathes through these pages? Hear the following narrative :—"Courtesy resisted passion in the breast of Gyron le Courtois, as he rode with the Lady of Maloane, saying to him within his mind, 'Haa, Gyron! Be not guilty of villainy, and think not to dishonor your friend; take heed how you deserve by your actions, the charge of treason, and of great villainy. For if you should act thus, you will never have honor more.' Nevertheless, he is about to succumb, till the falling of his sword into the fountain, causes him to hasten to the brink, when on stooping down to draw it out, his eyes are attracted by the words which were engraven on it: 'Loyauté pass tout et fausseté honnit tout.' Gyron, who had often read them before, who had been often comforted by them in many adventures, and sorrows, now reads them, as if for the first time, as something new, which speaks to his soul. Immediately struck motionless with a deep sense of the crime he was about to commit, he continued to gaze in silence, and to meditate with a sorrowful countenance. The lady, surprised, came up and asked him what he was thinking of, with such earnestness. 'Of what do I think, lady? Alas! I am thinking how narrowly I have escaped from being for ever dishonored; and I feel that I deserve to die for having harbored the thought within, of treason against my friend; and I am resolved to take vengeance upon myself. Ah! beautiful sword, thou wert once in the hands of a better knight, when thou wert wielded by thy great Hector le Brun, who on no day of his whole life, had ever a thought of treason; but I have thought treason, too foul and too villainous, against the most courteous man in the world;' and with these words, being overcome with an intolerable sense of his own wickedness, he would have plunged the sword into his side, and so rashly destroyed the sinner with the sin, had not the lady fallen upon him, and constrained his arm, till a knight came up, who took away the sword."\*

Much, I am aware, remains to be said respecting the vices which desolated society during the ages of faith. Great and beyond all description were the calamities of the city of God, when those two luminaries and immortal columns of the Church, Dominick and Francis, came into the world. As the historian of the Minors observes, "the demon having persecuted the infant Church, by tyrants, and the more advanced by heretics, endeavored now to oppress with both the joyful and flourishing Church, afflicting it with horrors on all sides, perils of the sword without, heresies within, and the iniquity of corrupt manners."†

With what eyes this corruption was regarded by multitudes at the very time, may be seen in these wondrous annals of the poor; and that the minds of men were equally awake at the period of the subsequent revolution, may be learned in a striking manner, from the third sermon of Lewis of Granada, on the feast of St. Dominic, or from the discourse of John Francis Picus, of Mirandula, *De reformatis moribus*, which he pronounced before Leo the Tenth. "Wilt thou tolerate

\* Gyron le Courtois, F. XLVII.

† Wadding apparat. ad *Annales Minorum*.

these monstrous things, O Leo, and wilt thou suffer them?" exclaims this virtuous prince. "Let those who do not observe the laws that are so well placed, feel the force of justice; for it is not by erecting Solomonian temples, or the Julian edifices of our age, that we can defeat the designs of our enemies; but by preserving the living temples of God, in sanctity and justice. There will be nothing to fear, if we only preserve the discipline of our faith, and that holiness of life, by which the world was formerly subdued. This every order, this the consent of all good men, demands and implores."

It is, however, in a future book, in contrast with the beatitude of peace, that we shall be more expressly required to survey the vices of the previous ages. For the present we may freely open our hearts to the gladsome, holy light, and endeavor to repair a deficiency which is to be deplored in most historic monuments, in which an entire order of facts, that, relating to the fulfilment of justice, is excluded to make room for details not in the least more certain, but only perhaps more in accordance with the secret desires of human vanity.

How few have heard of the Count and Countess of Gondi, the benefactors of St. Vincent de Paul, who died the death of the just, after having walked before God all their days, in sanctity! But to what region of the world has not the fame of their unhappy son extended, in consequence of his errors, or his crimes?

Great and glorious deeds were wrought by just men among our ancestors, says Benedict Aretino, though historians, to record them, were wanting. If one man, Leonardo Aretino, had not written those books on the Acts of the Florentines, the virtues of Huguccio Fagiolini, Rufus Castrucci, Guido of Arezzo, King Robert, Mastino, Archbishop of Milan, Count Alberic, Galeazzo of Mantua, Peter Farnese, and Galeazzo Malatesta, would have perished from the human memory. Judge, then, how many just, holy, and innocent men must have flourished during these ages, of whom we know nothing.\*

Who can estimate the multitude of the golden angelic souls, candid, puerile, and at the same time profound, to which the middle ages gave birth, and which passed without observation, or leaving behind in history any vestige or memorial of their transit? It was enough for the just that their death was precious in the sight of God, and that their lot was amongst the saints.

Beautiful and terrible was then the Church, as at all times, according to the wisest poet; beautiful in the splendor of the saints, terrible in the armor of the strong, beautiful in that golden vestment, composed of the variety of the just, terrible in the hand of the mighty ones of Israel; but where is the intelligence that can know, or the tongue that can enumerate the virtues of the holy men who pacifically flourished in the city of God, or who bravely militated in its defence? Only in visions of mysterious joy that did imparadise the soul, have a few men been vouchsafed a momentary glance at the mighty hosts, which in the final

\* De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog. Antiq. Italiæ IX.

judgment we shall see. "Behold !" cried a voice to one thus favored, "this fair assemblage ; stoles of snowy white, how numberless ! The city where we dwell, behold ! how vast ; and these our seats so thronged ; few now are wanting here."

---

## CHAPTER II.



**W**HAT was the state of the public mind and manners generally, during the middle ages, in relation to justice, or conformity to the Divine law ? This is the first question, which cannot be reasonably answered, until we have consulted the contemporaneous writers. But ere we proceed to interrogate them, let us recur to the reflection with which we closed the last chapter, in order that we may have a clear view of the position in which we stand towards the solution of the present problem.

I have said that the annals of nations, and the other monuments of antiquity, transmit the knowledge of only a very small part of the just and sublime souls that have passed upon the earth ; and, we may add, that, divided as the world is between those whom error and crime have seduced, the two societies of earth and heaven are in wondrous sort confused and blended together. "We know not," as St. Augustin says, "the number of the just or of the sons of the Church, that holy mother which may appear sterile upon earth. The number of her happy children is known only to Him who calls the things that are not as those that are."\*

We are not favored like him, to whom it was said by truth itself, "I will make all my good before thee pass." If we would not prove traitors in regard to history, this is one of the occasions on which we must be content to believe more than we can see ; for, to behold the multitudinous graces which descended upon human minds, through the long lapse of ages which we are reviewing, is a privilege reserved for spirits far otherwise exalted and happy, than any which are still encompassed with the darksome weeds of flesh. It would be a vision of the similitude of divine glory, such as will be on that day when the hearts of Christians shall be revealed, and when the deeds of the right hand that were to the left unknown shall be to the universe proclaimed. Nevertheless, while reason teaches the necessity of waiting for the future revelation of the double mystery of virtue and of crime, it is already possible, in this life, to compare Christian and Catholic manners

\* St. August. Enchirid. cap. 9.



with those of the ancient world and of the modern society, and to trace the development of that ineffable power which has so richly fructified God's vineyard.\*

In forming a judgment on such a question, I am aware that there is an almost infinite variety in the evidence that might be produced to suit the difference of minds; for each observer, according to his studies and habits of thought, will be disposed to attach a greater importance to some one or other of the numerous proofs which may be produced from the history and literature of the ages in review. In general, nothing will be more calculated to win attention and assent than incidental testimonies, with which assuredly no one need be scantily provided, for the only difficulty can be in choosing them out of the mass of evidence which presents itself to the recollection of every one who is conversant with the ancient Christian writings.

I said also that, during the middle ages, the crimes of the unjust were often brought forward for the instruction of men; and every one knows that the statements of holy priests and abbots have been converted by modern writers into formal testimonies, to prove the corruption of past times. Whether these great moralists of the middle ages did not sometimes indulge in rhetorical licence in such pictures, might be a very natural question. The English writers, moreover, of that epoch, seemed to have been peculiarly inclined to censure, and to a spirit of bitter criticism, from which not even such great and worthy men as John of Salisbury were sufficiently exempt. It may be observed also, that the most deplorable pictures of the general depravity, such as we find in the prologue to the Customs of Cluni, and in the first book of the Annals of the Camaldolese, were given as a kind of introduction to the history of some eminent servants of God, the authors of some wondrous and extensive reformation, or even to serve as a foil to the most eminent virtues existing at the same time, which were so great, as to draw forth that exclamation of an ancient writer: "O golden age of Romuald, which, although it knew not the torments of persecutors, yet wanted not a spontaneous martyrdom! O golden age, which amidst the deserts of mountains and woods, nourished so many citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem."† But whatever may be thought of these remarks, the most cautious reader must, at all events, admit that it will be allowable to meet arguments founded upon such statements of ancient writers, with the evidence of these writers themselves, from whose parenthetical and other incidental modes of expression one can often collect the most satisfactory of all kinds of testimony, in proof of the eminent piety and justice of the contemporary generation. Such I conceive to be that remark of St. Augustine, that "rarely was any one found in his time, to blaspheme Christ with his tongue." Such that testimony of St. Gregory Nazianzen, "that a man of pleasure, addicted to licentious habits, was then the object of public scorn and hatred,"‡ which seems repeated by the Norman historians, who speak of the disdain with which

\* Ezech. 2.

† Annal Camaldul. Lib. X.

‡ Cont. Fornic. 8.

so many knights refused to acknowledge William, on account of the illegitimacy of his birth; William of Jumièges expressly recording that on that account he was an object of contempt with the indigenous nobles. Such that remarkable distinction of Thomas à Kempis, "*Et omnes, ni fallor, homines cupiunt esse cum Christo, et ad populum ejus pertinere; sed pauci volunt sequi vitam Christi.*"† Such that complaint of Richard of St. Victor, "How many do we see in our days poor in spirit, rejoicing in hope, fervent in charity, abstaining much, and greatly patient; who are nevertheless too tepid in respect of the zeal of souls? Some, as if through humility, not presuming to reprove delinquents; others, lest they should seem to disturb fraternal charity, fearing to remonstrate with humble sinners."‡

From a few such passages as these, the least attentive reader, methinks, can form some idea of the justice and spiritual elevation to which the manners of the middle ages had attained. What philosophic writer could now support his arguments by appealing to the public voice to confirm such assertions as that it would be difficult to find any one who blasphemed Christ; that general scorn and hatred followed a breach of the Christian law; that all men probably wish to be with Christ, and to be of the number of his people; that the multitude is great who practice the precepts of perfection, and who err only through humility and the love of peace? Yet, with a certain allowance made, this could be done at so late a period as the fifteenth century; for that devout philosopher, Marsilius Ficinus, declares that he cannot bring any other accusation against his age, but that of having produced one impious man, the brother of his friend Oricellario, "who vomits blasphemies against God, from the same mouth that was made to proclaim his praise."

To complain idly of the present time, by comparing it with the past, had always been a favorite exercise of moralists.

*"Utinam veteres mores, veteres parcimoniæ  
Potius majori honori hic essent quam mores mali!  
Nam nunc mores nihil faciunt: quod licet nisi quod lubet?"*

Such is the complaint in Plautus; but it may be remarked that, during the ages of faith, this propensity of human nature has generally left much less trace of its indulgence, so that this is the only point in which the men of the middle ages resembled the modern race of Gallic land; in all other respects heeding little the present, but in their comparative views of justice, seeming to be without a past, or, in relation to the present earth, a future: and, in fact, they had heard the Church declare in her solemnities, that what the saints of old did not doubt would be, she knew had already been in great measure fulfilled. "It is a vicious propensity of some men," says Guibert de Nogent, writing in the eleventh century,

\* Hist. Norm. Lib. VII. c. 3.

† Epistolæ I.

‡ De præparatione animi ad contemplationem, cap. 41.

“to vituperate the deeds of the moderns, and magnify past ages. It was right, indeed, to praise the felicity of the ancients, and their vivacity moderated by prudence ; but in the estimation of no discreet person, is their secular prosperity in any manner to be preferred to our virtue ; for, although a certain merit shone eminently in them, yet in us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, the gift of nature hath not grown torpid. The deeds that were wrought in ancient times, may, indeed, be proclaimed justly for the recreation of men, but much more worthy of being published are those things which are usefully performed by the rude in this old age of the world. If we have heard that God was magnified in the Judaic people, we have known by sure experience that Jesus Christ as yesterday with the ancients, so to-day with the moderns is glorified.”\*

Again, what is still more curious, hear what Wandalbert Deacon, a monk of Prumieen, speaking in the ninth century, and saying, in the prologue to his life of St. Goar, addressed to the Abbot Marcuard, “Now that studies after many years of prostration in Gall, have been made to flourish again by the liberality of princes, and the wisdom of good men, we should be inexcusable if we did not transmit to posterity the acts of the holy persons which have come to our knowledge. Neither are they to be heard, who ascribe so much to past times, as to deny that any deeds performed at present are worthy of record ; for Divine Providence grants to all ages of the world what is fit for the human race in mode and measure, so that it is not right for us to desire the felicity of former men, nor is it credible that if they could have foreseen the state of our times, they would have condemned it ; for there are now also in the Church many men of illustrious virtue.”†

Will you descend to later times ? “This city of Lyons,” says Paravin, “although it contains a medley of all nations, can justly claim the title of ‘a house of religion,’ a ‘congregation of brothers,’ for there reigns within it a virtue and a union which can only proceed from the grace of God.”‡

The celebrated Traversari, that holy and learned Ambrose from the Desert of Camaldoli, coming to Bologna in the year 1434, found it a prey to civil dissensions ; yet, while lamenting these troubles, which he endeavored to appease, he hesitated not to say, in a letter to Albert, “Bologna hath men to whom, besides the graces of all humanity, is not wanting the fear of God, and the most profound reverence for religion ; so that without regard to the many monasteries of our order which it contains, necessity urges me to love and cherish that city, and to take delight in it.”§

In the epitaph of the blessed Guido, in the convent of Minors at Bologna, which is of the fourteenth century, that city is styled *Civitas sensata*, to express its celebrated learning, which gave rise to the saying, “*Bononia docet.*” Maffæus Veggius ascribes the success of St. Bernardine’s preaching at Milan, partly to the

\* Guibert de Novigent. *Gesta Dei per Francos.*

† Paravin *Hist. de Lyon*, Lib. III. c. 18.

‡ *Acta. Sanct. Ord. S. Benedict.* tom. 2.

§ *Annales Camaldulens.* Lib. LXII.



character of the inhabitants, whom he describes as a most humane people, most addicted to the divine worship, of a sweet and gentle nature, offensive to none, envious of none, always desirous of good, and living together in singular benevolence and charity, seeking rather to augment than diminish the honor of strangers ; without deceit, without affectation, and after sinning not with difficulty brought to penitence.”\* Muratori calls Milan “that beloved city, where still the manners of the golden age may be seen to flourish.”† The holy and learned Sigebert, in the twelfth century, had contracted such an affection and respect for the citizens of Metz, during his residence among them, that he inserted an elaborate panegyric on their city, into his history of Thierri, one of their bishops.‡ St. Bonaventura went farther than to praise one city. He used to return thanks to God for having sent him into the world in an age when he could hold converse with the holy men that were then living in the order of Minors.§ “If any age can be called golden,” says that religious philosopher Marsilius Ficinus, in his letter to Paul, the physician and astronomer of Middleburg, “unquestionably it is that which produces in greatest number the men of golden souls, whom Plato speaks of ; and that such is our age, no one can entertain a doubt who will examine it with attention.”||

With respect to the moral character of the laboring poor in the middle ages, there are many incidental fragments from which, I conceive, we should be justified in informing a favorable estimate. Such is that passage in the dialogue ascribed to St. Anselm, where, after the condition of soldiers and of artisans is shown to be full of peril, to the soul, the question is proposed, What say you of husbandmen ? which is thus answered by the master, “The majority of them are saved ; because they live with simplicity, and feed the people of God with the labor of their hands, and, therefore, are they blessed.”¶ You have, in many places, proof of the rustic population being profoundly imbued with a religious spirit, and, consequently, we must infer that the general tenor of its conduct was just and fair. “A circumstance happened in my youth,” says St. Gregory of Tours, “which shows us with what reverence and advantage men received bread that had been blessed by the hands of a holy priest. A certain priest going on a solitary journey, came in the evening to the auspice of a poor man, who received and lodged him. During the night, the priest rose as usual to say his office, and the man, whom necessity obliged to go into the forest to carry wood, rose very early. According to the custom of rustics, before it was light, he desired his wife to give him some food, which she brought to him ; but the man having received it, would not eat it before it had been blessed by the priest, or until he had received eulogies from him.”\*\*

Stephen Pasquier makes an observation which, in the same manner, proves the religious spirit of the age in which he wrote. “There is no more effectual way,”

\* Wadd. an. Min. X. † In Script. rer. Italic. Præfat. ‡ Hist. Lit. de la Franc. vol. IX.

§ Wadding Annal. tom. IV. an. 1262.

|| Marsil. Ficini Epist. Lib. X.

¶ S. Anselmi Elucidarii, Lib. II. cap. 18.

\*\* De Gloria Confessorum, c. 31.

he says, "to make a prince lose the hearts of his people, and deprive him of strength, than by excommunication, seeing that the principle power of every king lies in the devotion and love of his subjects."\* The force of such a passage can be estimated, when we observe its comparative inapplicability to the manners of men in subsequent times.

There is something, again, very striking as incidental evidence, in the plan of history pursued by Alfonso, of Carthagera, with regard to the kings of Spain, who, in relating how each is represented in painting, presents the most striking features of his character in a conspicuous and picturesque manner. Thus Wamba, he says, is painted armed, but wearing a monk's cowl; another is painted in a pacific vest though most warlike, because he never warred against the infidels. Alfonso the astrologer, is painted in a long pacific robe, holding a book in his hand, after the manner of learned men. The attachment of those kings to holy priests, is indicated in this manner: King Athanagildus is painted in a pacific garb, having at his side St. Martin, who preached in Gaul, and St. Æmilian. King Leovigildus is painted also in a long pacific habit, and near him stand Leander and Isidore, Spanish archbishops. Suintila the Second, king of the Goths, is painted in a pacific vest, in company with St. Eugenius, archbishop of Toledo. Recensuindus is painted in company with St. Ildefonsus. Hermigius is painted in a pacific robe, with the Archbishop Julian Pomerius at his side, a man of renowned life and learning. Veremundus the Second, is painted leaning on a staff, having at his side the Archbishop of Compostello, and another prelate. Ferdinand the First is painted in armor, on horseback, St. James delivering to him the keys of the city of Coimbra, and St. Dominus de Scillos at his side. Alphonso the Seventh is painted seated on his throne, wearing an imperial diadem, having at his side St. Adeilm. Alphonso the Eighth is painted armed, on horseback, and near him stand Constantia, abbess of Huelgas, which convent he founded, and St. Dominic, the father of preachers.† Certainly there is a great distance between this humble mode of writing, so characteristic of the middle ages, and what is called the philosophic majesty of Tacitus. But, on the other hand, who does not perceive that it has a certain kind of merit; for who does not feel that it supplies most decisive evidence as to the predominant character of these men; and if a similar mode of historic representation were adapted in reference to the race of kings who embraced the modern philosophy, and preferred it to the Catholic faith, who would not trust its fidelity? I do not inquire how one ought to paint these princes, or what persons should be placed at their side, certainly it would not be learned abbots and saintly bishops. I do not propose a question, which no one would be, for a moment, at a loss to answer; but I ask, who would not recognize the portrait at the first view, and, however ridiculous might be the association of images, who could doubt their accuracy?

\* Recherches de la Franc. III. 19.

† Alfons. a Carthagera Reg. Hisp. Anacephalæosis.

Again, from the general tone of literature, and especially from that of dramatic representations, similar conclusions may be drawn respecting the character of the age to which they belonged. In a former book we observed the religious tone which distinguished the learning of the middle ages. Here we might appeal to the heroic and noble images of virtue which abound in their popular poems and legends. A French traveller has lately remarked, that the Spaniards, in their ancient comedies, had captivating examples of all the virtues that can be recommended to a people,—loyalty, firmness, justice, and above all, mercy and goodness; so that no one could hardly witness them, without feeling a stronger disposition to practise these virtues.”\* It was the early heresies, as I shall have occasion to show, which infused a contrary spirit into the dramatic pieces of England.

If we proceed to examine the course of historical events, we have evidence of another kind equally satisfactory.

When we find the French nation so indignant at the voluptuous life of Childeric, that merely on that account they drove him from his throne, and gave it to another king, and did not permit him to return till after eight years of exile, when in the year 464 they became appeased—when we find Judicael, the king of Brittany, choosing not to dine at the table of the king of France, for the reason specified by St. Paul, and in order to avoid it going to dine with the chancellor, St. Ouen, at whose table was read holy lessons†—when we read of a St. Adalhard in the IXth century, a youth in the palace of the Emperor Lewis, and that when through hatred of King Desiderius, the emperor put away his lawful wife, the daughter of that king, and married another, this young Adalhard, though only a boy, felt such a detestation of that act, that he left the palace, and renounced all the brilliant prospects with which the world presented him,‡ we are led of necessity to believe that amidst the society of those times there was a living sense of virtue, a respect for justice, and an infinite fear of transgressing the Divine law. In general, I must repeat it, the views taken by modern historical writers respecting the manners of the middle ages, are certainly calculated to excite the astonishment of those who have made an exact and conscientious study of that interval. It would be well for historians if they were placed in the circumstances of Homer, who never speaks of the barbarians, for the reason, as Thucydides suggests, “that there was, in his time, no common name to oppose to them; for he does not speak of Greeks under one name, but only talks of Argives, and Achæans, and others.”§ The age of Louis XIV., or the age of the pseudo reformation, were with many writers found epochs of great convenience, to which all other periods of the Church were contrasted as barbarous.

A Catholic historian, than whom no one ever evinced a greater thirst for truth

\* Bourgoign, *Tableau de l'Espagne*, II. 403.

† Lobineau *Hist. de Bret.* I.

‡ Vita. S. Adalhardi Mabill. acta. S. Ordinis Bened. Sæc. IV. 1. § Thucydid. Lib. I. cap. 3.



and justice, says that "there never were manners more opposed to those of the primitive church than those which reigned during the tenth century." Observe, however, that even while drawing a most dark picture of ignorance and barbarism, for the purpose of representing these times, he formally admits that the primitive discipline of the church continued to subsist till the beginning of the tenth century, and that there never were ages of greater piety and fervor; that the most holy and zealous men succeeded in continued order, and that even during the worst time the faith was always pure, the great principles of morality firmly established, and the tradition, not only of sound doctrine, but of manners, preserved. These sentences are contradictory. The latter are incontrovertible; for we have in our hands the writings and the memorials of the tenth century, which prove that no such prodigious and sudden change had taken place. The latter therefore must be submitted to a long interpretation, to free them from the error which arose no doubt in a great measure from the influence of a certain school to which that illustrious historian had been attached, and partly perhaps from that fondness for antithesis, and of systematic divisions, which so often leads the best writers of his country into exaggeration. Chateaubriand says, "If you wish to see the horrors of those ages, read the Councils."\* True: but he would himself be the first to add, if you wish to see their virtue and their justice, read the Councils. It is there you observe with what solicitude provision was made that, as the Church prays, the people of God might avoid diabolic contagion.† Nothing can be more injurious again to history than that Pirrhoneism and spirit of singularity to which so many of the modern writers abandoned themselves. "I will say, also," adds Lenglet Du Fresnoy, "that too many reflections produce no less uncertainty in history than too few, as is seen in Varillas, who carried away by the beauty of some deep speculations respecting the death of the Prince of Castille, passes over in silence the real circumstances which he had before his eyes in the letters of Peter Martyr, in order to indulge his imagination with these subtle and groundless reflections."‡ It is an acute remark of Cardan; "ne credas omnes homines tam callidos esse, ut tu es;"§ and Lord Bacon makes the same; "Certainly," saith he, "it is an error frequent for men to shoot over, and to suppose deeper ends, and more compass-reaches than are." Moreover, there is a confusion of epochs in the mind of modern writers, who desire to show their knowledge of French history, by speaking of the manners of the ancient "Regime," as if those had been the manners of the middle age, and as if it was the system of the middle ages, which the revolution of the last century overthrew. But the antiquity of this state, dates only from the rise of the modern philosophy, which by diminishing the influence of faith, had led to the secularization, and to the demoralization of society. For when supernatural motives and manners had been

\* Discours Hist. tom. III. 420.

† Sund. XVI. after Pentecost.

‡ L'histoire justifié contre les Romains.

§ Prudentia civilis. cap. 62.

banished from life, as relics of a false religion, and of dark ages, there could be nothing reaped but the fruits of a licentious naturalism.

There is again another kind of evidence of which we must take advantage, arising from the numerous institutions which existed in the middle ages, spreading deep and wide roots through the whole social state and which, like the confraternities of laics, were especially directed to preserve the public morals from whatever could occasion scandal.\* These, as the Church sings, were the true fraternities which overcame the crimes of the world ; and followed Christ, possessing the noble kingdom of heaven.

In Spain the number of communicants in any city, used to be considered, till lately, as the certain basis for calculating its population.† This was the fruit which these associations produced every where.

The Florentines laid the axe at the root, when they established those societies of lay boys, composed of the noble, middle, and poor classes, which Ambrose of Camaldoli describes in his letter to Pope Eugene. Over each of these divisions, a faithful laic was appointed ; a grave religious man, who trained up these pupils in a secular habit, for the service of the Eternal King. "Their manners," says Traversari, "were preserved in innocence ; they were taught to avoid vain spectacles and plays ; to abstain from light words, to go often to confession and communion, and to exercise their talents in whatever manner their parents might wish. On Sundays and festivals they all assembled in one place, to celebrate the praise of God, and to have recreations of salutary colloquies. After the age of boyhood, they entered a superior class for youths ; and again a third was ready to receive them, so that they were trained to justice through all the critical stages of their lives."‡

Dante puts the description of the ancient purity of Florence in the mouth of one of the blessed spirits. Truly, the manners of our enlightened cities at present, would be strange matter for an angel's tongue : but what would it be to behold and converse with these first Florentines, whose renown time covers ? To see the Ughi, Catilini, Filippi, the Alberichi, Greci, and Ormanni—illustrious citizens, whose origin was a theme for the discourse of a celestial man from the desert, Ambrosius of Camaldoli.§

It is clear also, that the different orders of chivalry contributed, by the internal regulations which they maintained, to preserve or revive the manners of the Catholic faith. With what zeal and solicitude the morals of the Teutonic knights in Prussia were defended from contaminations, may be seen in all works relating their history. Winrich von Kniprode sent visitors to examine whether there was any thing to be found contrary to the honorable and holy life. They were first to admonish them with a brotherly love, and then, if that failed, to punish

\* Italia Sacra, tom. IV. 522.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LXII.

‡ Bourgoign, Tableau de l'Espagne, vol. III. 171.

§ De originibus Florentinorum civium.

with the strictest impartiality. This virtuous discipline produced the happiest effects upon the citizens also of the different states of Prussia. Wigand says, that soldiers and citizens were all alike maintained in virtuous order, by the example and care of Winrich von Kniprode. “*Tenuit milites atque clientes in iustitia per suam prudentiam, cives et rusticos, laudabiliter gubernando, viduis et orphanis compaciendo.*”

It was ordained by Winrich von Kniprode, in 1352, that in every house of the order which contained as many as twelve knights, there should be two very learned men to instruct and retain them in religion and justice.† In 1382, visitors were again sent throughout Prussia, to examine whether any one belonging to the order was ignorant of the usual prayers of Christians; and if any such were found, they were to be punished.‡

Again, the ancient writers themselves form another class of witnesses to prove the virtue and justice of the middle ages. What a multitude of just men then succeeded in constant order, by whose converse cheered, the people journeyed on and felt no toil! Their works, it is true, are all but baggage out of date now—books that were written by men of honor, for others like themselves; but the dispersed fragments of these old writers, which we occasionally meet with in the compositions of modern literature, impress us instantly with the idea that we should revere and kiss them, as if the bones and relics of holy men. “It is not said,” observes Pasquier, beginning to speak of Alain Chartier, “that I have to present you only with the memorable facts which have passed in France. Words and golden sentences of certain men are of no less value;”§ and he might have added justly, that in an historical point of view, they merit no less attention.

Finally, from a reference to their legislation, and the principles of government universally received, we derive further evidence of the public sense of justice, which pervaded society during the middle ages.

Joseph Scaliger quotes an ancient saying: “*Ex malis moribus bonas leges.*” Unquestionably, in respect to the minute regulation of actions, the legislation of the middle ages appears defective, in comparison with our own. But it is easy to account for this. The confessional superseded the criminal law. Moreover the law had not then supreme dignity. The law did not give authority to Churches. “*Lex imperatorum non est supra legem Dei sed subter,*” say the Decretals; || therefore all interests, purely national, were subordinate to something higher. “Take away justice,” says St. Augustin, “and what are kingdoms but great dens of robbers?”¶

Bayard used to say, we are told by the old writers of his life, that all empires, kingdoms, and provinces, without justice, are forests full of brigands. In days

\* Voight. *Geschichte Preussens*, V. 401.

† Id. V. 100.

‡ V. 390

§ *Recherches de la France*, VI. 16.

|| Ivon. Carnot. *Decret. Pars IV.* c. 86.

¶ *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. IV. 4.



of chivalry, therefore, valor, and the most successful deed of arms, was no excuse for an injustice committed against a weaker state. There were not then warriors received into the society of honorable men, to whom the Shakespearian admonition would be applicable: "Tell him that his sword can never win the honor that he loses."

No change in the administration of a kingdom during the middle ages, could have rendered it a nest of pirates, in regard to another country, with which it was professedly at peace.

In vain will you search the history of the middle ages, to discover a precedent for the system of intimidation adopted lately by combined states, trusting solely in their superior force, to awe the heroic champions of a just cause by insolent messages in the worst style of Roman oppression.

Before the rise of the new opinions in religion, which broke up the ancient and compact state of Christendom, nations, as well as individuals, had confidence in justice and law; and the most powerful would have shrunk from declaring openly that they held power by the sword. "That is the worst title of all," says a writer who saw and deplored the revolution which was taking place in the minds of men, "and fitter for those hordes of Tartarians than for a commonwealth of Christians. Neither Littleton nor Somme rural, nor jus feudale know any such tenure, whatever may be concluded from the aphorisms of Holland, and the divinity of La Rochelle."\* "Violentia perpetuitatem nescit," says Giles of Colonna, in the thirteenth century; "therefore if a king rules by force, his dominion will be short, and the happiness of a king is not to be placed in any thing transitory, but in what is eternal; and besides, men who would govern by civil power, are unjust, and not worthy of being kings."† "God chose to die for sin," says Richard of St. Victor; "in our deliverance God would rather use justice than power; because the devil is a lover of power, a deserter of justice; and in this respect men imitate him, who affect power, and hate justice.‡ Can we trace the operation of these sentiments in the history of the middle ages? Assuredly we can. The contemporary writers who eulogize William the Conqueror, are careful to assure their readers upon what ground they do so. "We deem it important," says William of Poitiers, who had been himself a warrior, "to say with the strictest truth, that if William, whose glory we record, which will displease, we hope, none, but prove agreeable to all men both present and future, took possession by force of arms of the principality of Mans as well as of the kingdom of England, it was that he was bound to do so according to the laws of justice."§ On the other hand, Oderic Vitalis attests that many nobles followed the example of Gilbert, surnamed the Avoire of St. Valeri, cousin of the Duke of Normandy, to whom he was always faithful, and who was present with him in all his battles

\* Jerusalem and Babel, 294.

† Sermo in die Paschæ.

‡ Id. II. I. de regimine principum I. I. 9. II. I.

§ Vita Guliel.

in the English war, and who, when the kingdom was pacified, and William established on the throne, in spite of the offer which this prince made him of great possessions in his new estates, returned to Neustria, and refused to participate in any degree in the plunder beyond sea; "Content with his own wealth," says the historian, "he rejected that of others, and devoutly offered his son, Hugues, to the ecclesiastical discipline in the monastery of Riche."\*

The rights of men among Catholic nations were not as a convention of their diplomacy, but as a necessity of their faith; having for guarantee and for rule, not the balance of power, or the text of protocols, or the will of tyrants, or the caprice of ministers, or the vote of a parliament, but the prescript of justice, the voice of the Holy See, and, as it were, the conscience of mankind. When Henry II. in writing to Louis VII. of France, styled St. Thomas "the late archbishop," that king exclaimed immediately, "and who has deposed him? I who am also a king, cannot depose in my states the least of clerks." In those days, the experience of the old humanity was still verified, and as Hesiod remarked, "the cause of justice, as far as it was under the influence of human agency, was sure to prevail in the end."

— δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει,  
ἔς τέλος ἐξελοῦσά†

"Who is just," asks Æschylus, ἀνάγκας ἄτερ; "without necessity?"‡ You have heard the sad but true estimate of all ancient governments, prior to the creation of that common, international and domestic law, which the Catholic religion introduced, and which, in later times, has been supplanted by the artificial contrivances of political sophists, who recognized no other principles but expediency and force. Instead of the deep foundation of justice which lay at the bottom of the German empire, in the middle ages, Europe has adopted the new principle emanating from the doctrines of the innovators, of the balance of powers; a sufficient indication of what they deem trustworthy.

Some modern historians have acknowledged the extraordinary character of justice belonging to the ancient governments. "Without doubt," says Michelet, "St. Louis owed that elevation of mind which places equity above law, in a great measure to the Franciscans and Dominicans with whom he was surrounded."§ King Ferdinand, at his death, appointing Ximenes regent of Spain, assigned as his motive for doing so, the integrity of the man, and the bent of his mind, which was always desiring what was right and just.|| We find this character expressly noted on many ecclesiastical tombs of the middle age. Hugo in the twelfth century Abbot of Pontigny, and afterwards Bishop of Auxerre, lies buried in that abbey, with these verses over him.

"Hunc à justitiæ norma revocare nequibant  
Obsequium, terror, gratia, dona, preces.

\* Hist. Normand. Lib. VI.

† Hesiod. Op. et Dies.

‡ Eumenid. 550.

§ Hist. de France II. 612.

|| Wadd. Ann. Minorum. tom. XVI.

*Sola triumphabat virtus pietatis in illo  
Cum post justitiam debuit esse pius.*\*\*

Wherever we trace the spirit of the clergy in the ancient legislations, we find them characterized by this spirit of incorruptible justice, bending only to the charity of the Gospel. Open the code of the Visigoths of Spain. There we read, that laws are not to be enacted for any private advantage but for the utility of all the citizens;† that law is a rival of the Divinity, a priest of religion, a nurse of justice, and the soul of the whole popular body:‡ that the law must be the same for all, for citizens and peasants, that it must be according to nature, according to the custom of the state, according to place and time, prescribing useful and necessary things;§ that all will be better men, and more strongly defended by equity than by arms; that justice should advance first to meet an enemy before the soldier brandishes a javelin.|| You find the same notions prevailing in the thirteenth century. "All human laws," says Giles of Colonna, "should be conformable to natural law, to the common good, and to the particular nations to whom they are applied; they must be just, useful, and congenial to the customs of the country, and to the time." In the government of every state must be considered the prince, the council, the magistracy, and the people.¶ Here is justice, and no exaggeration, as in the language of the modern sophists, who speak as if there were nothing in a state but the people.

Would you behold these principles in action? Witness the happy state of Ravenna under the sway of Venice, after the rival families of Traversari and Polenta had been subdued. "Happy city!" cries an old historian, "than which no state was ever governed with more clemency, or with a more equal dispensation of justice."\*\*\* The confessor of Queen Marguerite, wife of St. Louis, relates, in his life of that holy king, that "one day having stopped at Vitry, he went into the cemetery of the parish church, to hear the sermon of brother Lambert of the order of the preaching friars, and that he sat down at his feet; and that a noise occurring in a neighboring tavern, he made him cease, and inquired to whom the jurisdiction of the place belonged, not wishing to order any thing against the authors of this noise unless with the ordinary formalities." The king of the middle ages was thus subject, like the least of the people, to the ordinary magistrate. The severity of Rollo, under whose administration golden bracelets could be suspended from the trees in the forests near Rouen, for three years, without being touched by any one, is ascribed by William of Jumièges, not to his desire of displaying power, but to his love for justice, which is taught by the Divine law.†† The results in similar instances were certainly not a little remarkable. The continuator of William of Jumièges says, that "Richard of Normandy, styled the father of

\* Bulaeus Hist. Universit. Paris, tom. II.

† Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. I. 3.

‡ Id. Lib. tit. II. 2. § Lib. I. tit. II. 4.

|| Lib. I. tit. II. 6.

¶ De Regim. Princip. Lib. III. p. 11. c. 16. 26.

\*\* Desid. Spreti de origine Urbis Raven. Lib. I.

†† Hist. des Normand. Lib. II. cap. 20.



his country, and particularly of monks, maintained such justice, that laborers used to leave their instruments in the fields without fear of losing them; that if any thing were ever stolen, the count would pay the loser out of his own purse;" and another historian relates that "Gaufrey, the illustrious Count of Poitiers, maintained such an exact dispensation of justice, that during all his time, no traveller or rustic laborer in the kingdom of Aquitaine was ever disturbed; so that these times," he adds, "might justly be compared to the happiest age of former Christian princes."\*

The abbot Alexander says, that "the dangers from robbers to which travellers were exposed in the provinces of Salerno and Amalphi, before the coming of Roger from Sicily, was owing to their having been no government since the death of duke William who left no legitimate heir. So wise and effective was the succeeding administration under king Roger, that through all parts of his dominions every kind of iniquity was extirpated, and nothing was followed but what had relation to justice and peace, so that the word of the Psalmist seemed fulfilled, 'Justitia et pax osculata sunt.'"<sup>†</sup>

The historians of Genoa, commemorating the justice and continence of Matthew Maruffus, who commanded the fleet of that republic, relate that "wherever he was sent to govern, he contrived to impart his own manners to the people, so that the cities committed to him seemed no longer like cities, but like religious communities, full of sanctity. Precious objects might be left on the pavement during the night, and would be touched by no one that passed."<sup>‡</sup> Bracellio ascribes the grandeur and wealth of Pera and Capha, which had originated in a few miserable cottages, to the admirable administration of the Genoese government, and to the holy and innocent lives of their rulers. Simon Vignosus, general of that republic, having conquered the island of Chio, during the siege of the city issued a decree declaring that, "if any soldier were found trespassing in the vineyards he should be beaten publicly with rods." Shortly after, some husbandmen caught his own son Francis, a youth, in their enclosures, and without knowing who he was, brought him to his father, whom no prayers could induce to swerve from his decree; so that his son incurred the penalty, and was scourged, having bunches of grapes tied round his neck. When this just man was dying, he bequeathed five hundred pieces of gold to be distributed among the poor maidens of Chio, to serve for their marriage portions, hoping thus to make amends for the misery which the husbandmen had suffered during the war.§

The ideal of kingly power is admirably expressed in many of the inscriptions and monuments of the middle ages; as where the justice of Charles, Duke of Calabria, eldest son of Robert, King of Sicily, whose tomb is in the convent of

\* Fragment. historiæ Monast. Pictarensis. apud. Martène Thesaur. Anecd. tom. III.

† Alex. Abb. de Rebus gest. Rogerii, Lib. IV. c. 4.

‡ Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum elogia Thesaur. antiq. Italiæ, I.

§ Jacob. Bracellius de claris Genuensibus.

the Poor Clares at Naples, is represented by the figures of a lamb and a wolf drinking together out of a shell placed beneath his image.\* Nothing could better represent the power by which the houses of the religious orders were preserved so long.

During the middle ages, laws were not multiplied as they have been subsequently under the dominion of governments styled popular and constitutional. The ancient poet pronounced those times happy under kings and tribunes, which beheld Rome content with one prison.† What would we have thought of later ages, and under the new forms of administration, when the number and excellence of its prisons forms a country's pride? "I wish," says Heinsius, "that not only our manners, but our laws, of which we have now neither law nor measure, could be brought back to former times. Believe me, it would be easier to live under twelve than under an infinite number of laws."‡ What need of a Fannian law, when manners were simple? who desired a Cæcilian when there was the same cultivation in the country as in the city? who a Julian, when the love of money was not predominant? who a Falcidian, when virtue and honor were considered the best inheritance? who a Scantinian, when men lived chastely, and in the bonds of wedded love? who a Memmian, when detraction and calumny were in horror? The laws of the middle ages were only for this end—"that by fear of them human wickedness might be restrained, and the life of the innocent be safe amidst the wicked."§ It would seem as if justice was the object for which every thing was sought and done, as is professed in the Socratic line, *δικαιοσύνης δὴ ἕνεκα πάντα ζητοῦμεν*.|| "A prince must not place his happiness in civil power," says Giles of Colonna, "for if he should have that opinion, he will study to train the citizens to do nothing but the exercise of arms, and to those things by which he can subdue nations to himself. Therefore, he will lead the citizens not to justice but to fortitude. Now justice is a greater good than fortitude, therefore the citizens will be led to neglect the greater for the lesser good. Kings should place their felicity in the act of prudence commended by charity; and for the love of God they should govern the nation committed to them according to law and reason, holily and justly. A king is a name of office, for it is his duty to rule and direct the people to its proper end, as the name itself indicates; and for this reason he must have prudence, without which a man placed in royal dignity will become a tyrant, under the impression of sensible things, heeding nothing but how he can extort money."¶

The justice which consisted in regarding the public interest was certainly in a remarkable manner predominant in the mind of many rulers and administrators of government during the middle ages. Louis X. Count of Evreux, guarding against the danger of future dissensions, says in his testament, that "the last will

\* Wadd. Ann. Minorum. tom VII.

† Juv. III.

‡ Heinsii Orat.

§ Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. I. tit. II. 5.

|| Plato de Repub. Lib. IV.

¶ De Regim. Princip. I. 1. 10. and II. 1. 7.

of a man is well ordered, when he provides for the salvation of his own soul and for the peace of those whom he leaves heirs to his property.”\* Catholic annals are full of examples of this maxim being practised by kings, in defiance of all family interests, and personal ambition. “Conrad having no male issue, Eberhard, his brother, was heir to the throne; but the king perceived that he did not possess the ability requisite, nor the manners which could gain the favor of the people; so that when he grew old, being frequently asked to commend him to the people, he always eluded it, and on his death-bed, taking him aside, he spoke as follows, ‘My dear brother, I see, and I have always seen, that you are not favorably accepted by the people, and therefore, to avoid causing you affliction, I always kept silence when I was addressed on your behalf; but if you will take counsel now of me, as I trust you will in God, you will not be inglorious. There is in Saxony, Henry, the husband of Matilda, to whom I know of no one equal in the kingdom. Taking, therefore, the crown and sceptre, travel day and night to him, and place yourself and the kingdom in his hands, and be ye both mindful of my life.’ He did as the king advised, and on his arrival demanded a secret audience of the count. When every one else had withdrawn he closed the door, took from under his cloak the crown and sceptre, threw himself at his feet, and related what had been said by Conrad. In fine, after a public deliberation, Henry, with consent of the Saxons and Franks, was anointed king, though subsequently by the evil counsel of Kisilbertus, the unhappy Eberhard forfeited the glory of this noble action with his life.”†

Ludovicus Pius, himself an emperor, and son of Charlemagne, being made judge between Milegast king of the Vultzes and his subjects, who had deposed him, gave his verdict for the subjects, and for him whom they had chosen in his room. Michelet after relating the instructions of St. Louis to his son, in which he says, that he would prefer seeing his kingdom governed well and loyally, by a Scot from Scotland, rather than ill by his own son, exclaims, “Beautiful and affecting words! It is difficult to read them without being moved. At the same time the emotion is mingled with reflections on one’s self, and with sadness. This purity, this sweetness of soul, this astonishing elevation, to which Christianity raises its hero, who will give them back to us? Certainly, morality is more enlightened at the present day (attend reader, to the general burden of the passage), but is it more powerful? That is a question well calculated to trouble every sincere friend of the moral progress. Who does not thrill with joy on seeing the victory of equality? I only fear, lest in adopting so just a sentiment of his rights, man may have lost something of the sentiment of his duties. The heart sinks when one sees that in this progress of every thing, moral force has not increased. The notion of free will, and of moral responsibility, seems to grow weaker every day.”‡

Modern literature supplies many of these remarkable testimonies, to the excel-

\* Hist. D’Evreux, 220. † Ekkehard de casibus S. Galli, cap. 5. ‡ Hist. de France, tom. II. 622.



lence of the ancient Catholic state. Huber, in his Sketches of Spain, says, "that however paradoxical it may sound, there is perhaps no country so well adapted as Spain, where more, perhaps, of the manners, at least of that state, had been preserved than in any other country, to excite wholesome doubts respecting the pompous wisdom of our legislators, and statesmen. Let the material disadvantages belonging to the Spanish state, and people, be ever so much exaggerated, still," he continues, "it cannot be denied that they are in a high degree a state; nay, besides what is more remarkable, that this order of things, however it may be called, has created and educated a people and race, which for capability of genuine moral worth, and natural application, is surpassed by no nation in the world, not even by that which presumes to suppose itself at the summit of European civilization."\*

Speaking of those who condemn and scorn as barbarous the spirit and manners of the Spaniards, he says, "such judgments are perfectly worthy of the spirit of our whole civilization." The last end of our whole industrial representative system, is the production of the greatest possible quantity of material enjoyments and their distribution amongst the greatest possible number of men. Freedom, knowledge, religion, poesy, are different wheels in the great machine which manufactures pleasure for the people. The people themselves are supposed to stand higher in civilization, in proportion as they have greater and more numerous physical enjoyments. All this has its good, and is matter for development. Only the pride which represents this as the only good, is not good; and it is allowable to hope in God, that some other object and motive may lie at the foundation of the life of a people, as of an individual, to hope that the vacuity of this system, by degrees may be shown and felt; and that for the worth of a nation some other criterion may be proposed and recognized, than the number of yards of satin which it can annually produce.

It is the remark of a modern traveller to the East, that in the age of Guillaume de Champlite, prince of Morea, and Geoffroi de Villardouin, when the feudal system was established in Greece, governments protecting without boasting, both the liberty and the happiness of the people, had far stronger foundations than the interests of parties, or the popular fancies of the day. Accordingly, Feudal Greece lasted two centuries, and it owed its fall to circumstances independent of the established system.† Witness again that republic of Venice, which to the astonishment of all people, maintained itself for twelve centuries, an example of freedom to the human race; whereas the Spartans and Romans had only preserved theirs during eight, and five hundred years. The Catholic Church, like the Minerva of Æschylus, had warned her favored people, not to change their institutions. "All will go well," she said, "provided the citizens do not introduce innovations into the laws, moved by evil influences; αὐτῶν πολιτῶν μὴ πικα-  
ινούντων νόμους κακαῖς ἐπιρροαῖσι."‡ Catholic free states did not, like the

\* p. 25.

† Michaud, Correspondance de l'Orient, 124.

‡ Eumenid. 693.

pagan Roman, owe their steadiness mainly to the subsistence of houses, in which principles and feelings might be transmitted for ages, as an heirloom, from generation to generation. Niebuhr cites the instance of the house of Russel in England; but we may say, that no country was left depending for its happiness upon any member of one family remaining true to the principle which it advocated some hundred years before.

There is profound philosophy, as well as a just historical statement, in a passage of Stephen Pasquier, in which he accounts for the preservation of the state of France, during times of extraordinary danger. "Witness," he says, "the reign of Charles VI., his madness, the civil wars, the entrance of the English, and how by a great mystery of God, the kingdom was, nevertheless, preserved to Charles VII. his son, and to his posterity. If you ask me the cause of such success, it is easy to gather it if one is versed in the history of France: for in the midst of all these troubles, every one conspired devoutly to maintain the dignity of the Church, and to extirpate errors as well as abuses."\*

The same idea is presented in his great work. "The first race of kings, from Pharamond to Childeric, lasted," he observes, "336 years. The second 237 years; and the third has maintained itself to our times, the long duration of which, in comparison with the two former, may be thus accounted for. The two first produced magnanimous kings, and warriors, but not of equal policy; and this last, along with force and magnanimity, founded institutions of law, and universities, in which theology was taught, which are not little provisions of police, for our preservation."†

The internal administration of government was similarly characterized by the justice which requires that the happiness of the multitude should not be sacrificed to the interests of a few, under the pretence of constitutional forms. "If kings were not content with the honor of affection from the people," says Giles of Colonna, "but should require from the nation committed to them other exterior goods, as gold and silver, they would be tyrants, for they would then become robbers of the people."‡ Accordingly, "neither under the first, nor under the second, nor for a very long time, under the third line of our kings, had we in France," says Pasquier, "these taxes, aids, and subsidies, which we now see. Under the third race, kings lived on their own domain or treasure; but for extraordinary expenses, they had privileges, as in travelling, they would lodge for a night at a bishop's palace, or an abbey, which right was exchanged for a sum of money, called 'droit de giste.' The common people, in like manner, were bound to furnish horses or carts, from town to town, which was exchanged also for money, 'droit de chevauchée.' On knighting a prince of France, there would be a tax: but besides these

\* Lettres de Pasquier, Liv. X. 6.

† Qui ne sont pas petits traicts de police pour nous conserver. Recherches de la France, Liv. III. c. 13.

‡ De Regum. Princip. I. Lib. I. c. 9.

extraordinary levies, none were ever made. Subsequently, Philip-le-Bel, by an invention of his own, invited the nobles, clergy, and third estate to meet in assembly, and bring an offering for the public expenses; and as the commons liked such assemblies, as doing them honor, they were more disposed to give money with a good grace. And never was there a general assembly of the three estates of France, without increasing the finances of our kings, to the diminution of those of the people. But when the said king, in defiance of his preceptor, Giles of Colonna, sought to levy taxes by force, the people would not obey; and at Paris, Rome, and Orleans, openly revolted. By degrees, however, the tax was imposed permanently, though the king was obliged to swear that he would employ it only for necessary war, and the defence of the state.\* Similarly to the present times, the imposts which the Biscayans pay to the king of Spain, have the name and character of a gratuitous gift.†

But it is not alone from these general views, that we arrive at the desired conclusion, respecting the thirst of the middle ages, and its effects of justice. Our conclusions are not drawn merely from theories and general views. With the iron-clasped and iron-bound books of those times in our hands we can point out, and name the men whom we can conceive, and whom, without the Catholic Church, we can only conceive. Of all the great and good, who flourished from their commencement to their close, it would indeed, as we have already observed, be impossible to speak; for truly, the prophetic view was verified in the friends of God! "I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand." It would be as hard for a mortal tongue to tell of these as, according to Hesiod, it would be to name the sons of Ocean, who are known to the immortal race.

"It was the desire, however, of the monastic historians," as William of Jumièges says of himself, "that the excellent merit of the just, in regard both to the things of this world, and to those of heaven, subsisting happily before the eyes of God, should also subsist usefully in the memory of men." To tell of deeds above heroic, though in secret done and unrecorded, left through many an age, worthy to have not remained so long unsung, would truly impart the rapture of a celestial music; though vain would be the attempt, unless we had drunk of that pure stream of Eunce, gifted with power, to bring remembrance back to every good deed done, whose taste exceedeth all flavors else; but God, who doth ever establish new examples of virtue in his Church, leaveth us not in need of such complete and universal retrospects; and it is enough to tell of some who faithfully represented the ages to which they fell, though, as our limits warn us to speed, I must still prefer general impressions to multiplicity of detail, inviting the reader to contemplate, as it were, the soft illumination diffused over the whole sky of those ages, which are said to have been buried in the shades of night, without suffering his eyes to rest fixedly upon any one particular star.

\* *Recherches de la France*, Lib. II 7.

† Bourgoign, *Tableau de l'Espagne*, I. 23.

‡ *Prayer Fest. of St. Andrew Corsini*.



There is a kind of praise bestowed on individuals, in ancient books, from which, undoubtedly, a judicious reader can infer nothing; but there are, on the other hand, eulogies of a different description, which can be admitted as historic evidence; for when Hugo Falcand observes that the virtue and incorruptible faith of Robert, Count of Lorotelli, Symon, Count of Polycastro, and Ebrard, Count of Squillace, were so well known to Maja of Bari, that when conspiring against William, king of Sicily, he felt assured that his own projects could not prosper, unless these noblemen were first removed;\* or when the monk of Crowland, speaking of king Henry's death, says of his enemy, "May God spare him, and give him space for penitence, who thus dared to lay sacrilegious hands upon the anointed of the Lord; a man of such innocence of life, of such patience in adversity, and of such love for God and for the Church;"† the mind of the most cautious reader acquiesces at once, and experiences an intimate sense of conviction as to the truth of the incidental panegyrics. There is also a mode of praise which, however we may feel inclined to doubt the justice of its application, in a particular instance, proves, at least, what was the mark at which desires ought to have been aimed, according to the general opinion and spirit of the age. Such is the testimony of the old chronicle of Du Guesclin, where speaking of King Charles of France, it adds, who "loved justice and chivalry with such sincerity, that he was a true man, and of holy life, as long as he lived." And such, that of the ancient historian of Bayard, who says, on the death of king Charles VIII., "I believe that God took him to be amongst the blessed, for the good prince was not stained with a single villainous vice."‡

Of direct testimonies, I shall be content with producing but a few; for where should I end, if I were to adopt the manner of modern writers, in collecting all the attestations of grace, as they heap together all the charges of guilt which can be gathered from ancient books? Few words will suffice, to show the injustice of that remark, made by an illustrious writer of our time, where speaking of the men whose history we are recording, he says, "they adored at Calvary; they did not attend at the Sermon on the Mount;" a striking sentence, no doubt, but certainly it was not so that the contemporary observers described the men around them; on the contrary, the words of St. Odilo, in allusion to blessed Maiolus, his predecessor in the abbatial dignity of Cluny, corresponded with the common style of praise, bestowed upon all eminent persons, whether laymen or priests, who attracted their attention. "With the poor in spirit," as he says, "they wished to be poor, that they might be enriched by the King of Heaven with a celestial kingdom; with the blessed meek, they studied to become meek, that with them they might possess the land of the living; with the blessed mourners, they desired to lament the negligence of their children, and the dangers of the whole world; that with

\* Hugo Falcandi Hist. Sicula Rer. Italic. Script tom. VII.

† Hist. Croylandensis in Rer. Anglic. Script. tom. I.

‡ Chap. XI.

them all, they might come to the eternal consolation ; with those that hungered and thirsted after justice, they studied to associate with that justice, hungering and thirsting after it, that with them they might feast at the celestial banquet, and be satiated with spiritual delights ; with the merciful, they studied to be merciful, that with the blessed merciful they might obtain mercy from the Lord. As far as it was possible for men, by incessant desires, merits, and prayers, they deserved to attain to Divine contemplation, that with the blessed clean of heart, they might be admitted to the vision of God ; in order that they might be truly called the children of God, they learned to be pacific, not only to possess their own souls in patience, but also to bring back all that were at variance, to concord and peace. For the sake of justice, they learned to bear persecution, and passions, from the ancient enemy, and from evil men ; that blessed on account of suffering for justice, with the patient and the poor in spirit, they might become associates to obtain and possess the kingdom of heaven.”\*

Hear how Angelus Gualdensis, a blessed hermit of the thirteenth century, is described. “This man of God,” saith a contemporary, “learned, and acquired, and truly preserved, the beatitudes which our Saviour taught his disciples in the Holy Gospel.”† So interwoven was this ideal of justice with all general notions of religion, that, like the cross, it was expressed in material monuments, and symbolically represented in the very edifices of the middle age. Indeed, so early as in the times of St. Ambrose, if we credit Landulph, the old historian of Milan, the doctrine of the beatitudes was expressed in this manner ; for on the stone table, entitled the *chrismon* of St. Ambrose, in that Church by which the catechumens were instructed in the principles of the faith, there was described a circle, within which eight lines were drawn, extending from the centre to the circumference, to signify the eight rules of blessed life, which are in God, who has neither beginning nor ending.‡ In the year 823, Eigil, abbot of Fulda, constructed on a hill, near that monastery, which was a place of burial for the brethren, a mystic work, to denote, as the ancient historian observes, that we are all one body in Christ, by whom we are sustained with the eight beatitudes preached in the Gospel, and to whom, as our sole and final mark, we tend. This was a little church, under the title of St. Michael, of which the subterraneous part was supported by one column in the centre, from which arches sprang in all directions ; the remainder, which was in the form of an octagon, having eight columns, was terminated at the summit with a pyramidal arch, which was closed with a great stone.§ The whole house, being thus supported by one stone, and closed by one,—typical and subtle work, which Candidus, the monk, describes in solemn verse in his metrical life of Eigil. It should be remembered, besides, that those whom the Church has canonized, cannot be excluded

\* Vita S. Maioli Abb. Clun. IV. S. Odilone auct. Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 284.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. XLV.

‡ Landulph. Mediolanens. Hist. Liv. I. c. 12. in Muratori Rer. Italic. Scriptor. tom. IV.

§ Schannat. Historia Fuldensis, Pars III.

from the rank of historical personages; the princes, warriors, statesmen, philosophers, the rich, the poor, the learned, and the simple men of all classes, during the ages of faith, contributed to augment that vast multitude; and as Lewis of Grenada says, "all the saints were poor in spirit, all were mild, all were merciful, all were clean of heart, all were pacific, all hungered and thirsted after justice, all mourned and wept for their own and others' sins; and all suffered persecution for the sake of justice.\*

If we look to the palaces of princes, we find the court of a Charles V. of France, preserved in such purity of manners, that if the king ever heard of any of the courtiers having a dishonorable connection, however he might have loved him, from that moment he deprived him of all favor, drove him from the court, and would see him no more. Christine de Pisan says, that no book of a pernicious tendency to manners, was suffered to be within the palace, nor any person to remain whose language was not chaste and innocent.† Accordingly, when this prince resolved that the minority of the future kings of France should expire after their fourteenth year, by his edict from Vincennes in 1374, full of fine reasons and histories, as Pasquier says, he did not fear to appeal publicly to the judgment of men, in confirmation of the fact that all kings, and especially those of France, were from their infancy placed under such good masters for education, that no danger could be anticipated from placing power in their hands at that early age.‡ Whatever may be thought of the opinion, such an appeal from a just, and wise king, who respected his people, is assu edly remarkable.

At all events, it is not from the history of the middle age, that Milton would be enabled to justify his position, that kings are commonly the worst of men. In a former book we saw kingly power wielded by the blessed meek, and here it presents itself to our view in the hands of the just. Roderic Santius speaks of the early Spanish sovereigns, as if he had known, from having been vouchsafed, like Dante, a vision of paradise, how well is loved in heaven the righteous King. Lo ! he makes them pass before you, and names them : " Suintilla the 26th king of the Goths, loved of God and men. Alfonso I. the Catholic, dear to God, and to men. Tulgas, the 29th king, Catholic, and full of all goodness, humble, liberal, loving justice, beloved by clergy and people. Alfonso the Chaste, the 9th king after the slaughter of Spain, sober, chaste, pious, and humble. Recaredus, most zealous for the Catholic faith, against the Arians; one of the best kings of Spain. Alfonso VII. a true lover of justice. Santius III. called the Desired, so holy and innocent, that his premature death at Toledo, was ascribed to the singular love which God had for his soul. Alfonso VIII., the Good, who married Leonora, daughter of Richard, king of England, blessed in his offspring. Ferdinand III., most glorious, most religious king, not so much to be praised, on account of his

\* Ludovic. Granatens. de omnibus sanctis concio. I.

† Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage Roy Charles V. c. 29.

‡ Recherches de la France, Liv. II. c. 19



many victories, as for having in the splendor of the palace, and at the summit of human honor, feared God, worshipped the Church, and deserted not the place of virtue; amidst the abundance of riches, and the delights of royal blood, setting his heart not on the increase of his own dominion, but on the propagation of the faith, for which he exposed his life daily to every danger.”\*

Such was the renown of King Ferdinand the Saint, and so esteemed was he even by the infidels, that at his death Mohamed Abu Alahmar, the Moorish king of Granada, sent a train of 100 Moorish knights, who were to assist at the funeral, each carrying a lighted taper; and this grand testimony of respect was repeated by the Moslem monarch, on each anniversary of the death of king Don Ferdinando el Santo, when the 100 knights, with their tapers, took their station round the catafalque.

There is a beautiful narrative in an ancient chronicle, which places the Christian virtue and continence of a Spanish king in an admirable light. Bartholomew de Neocastro relates that the people of Messana, being delivered from the French, and having invited Peter, king of Arragon, to accept the crown of Sicily, on the expulsion of Charles of Anjou, that prince set out from his states, invoking the name of Jesus Christ, and after a prosperous journey, arrived amidst his new subjects, though being a prudent prince, he still travelled slowly at easy stages, in order to watch the course of events. One evening, coming to a spot on the sea-shore, near Miletus, whence there was a delightful view over the Mediterranean, embracing the islands of Lipari and Stromboli, the place seemed so convenient and delicious, that he resolved to pass the night there. When all were taking their rest, there came to him an old man of horrid mien, and rough garments, who had descended from the rocks of Mount Etna, in order to speak unto him. He warned the king to beware of the Sicilians. The following night the king being at Casale Santa Lucia, which is only two miles from Miletus, there came to him Machalda Alaymi, wife of the soldier Leontinus, a woman of great beauty, and of martial spirit, who had done great service in the cause of Sicily, delivering it from the French. “Seigneur,” she said to him, “I come to be your guest this night, because at the last hospice, there was no lodging to be obtained, owing to the multitude of people assembled to welcome you amongst us. I have come to see you, like the other Sicilians. This is a happy day; this to me is a day of consolation and joy, in which the Lord, on account of you, hath delivered Sicily from its miseries.” This woman wore armor, and she held in her hand a silver key; there was a certain composition of mystery in her mien, which comprised an air of cunning, as with firm and laughing eyes she gazed upon the prince. The king suddenly rising up, led her, with his attendants, to the place where she should repose, while he intended to have a spot remote for himself. The lady, however,

\* *Roderici Santii Episcop. Palentini Hist. Hispaniæ Pars II. et III. apud Hispaniæ illustratæ. Francfort MDCCIII.*

sat down with him, who was unwilling, and the king said to his chief steward, "It is time now to retire to rest;" and this he said, adds the historian, "that she might go away;" but she only staid there the more adhesively. The king then seeing that she chose to stay, tried in another way of courtly ingenuity, to divert her from her unhappy purpose; and he said to her, "Lady, what is it that you fear worst of all things?" She replied, "Lest my husband should fall." "Lady," he said again to her, "What is it that you love most of all things?" "What is not mine," was her subtle reply; still the king wished to endeavor, by honest conversation, to wave her from her design; so having called his knights and domestics, he said to them, "Let us pass the night in familiar discourse, till the hour of proceeding forth; and he said to the woman, "Lady, do you wish to hear what perhaps you have never heard? the history of my birth, and the chief mystery of my life?" And she said, "Willingly." Then said the king, "The noble queen, our mother, was daughter of the king of Hungary, and her name was Nicolesia; and our lord father, was the good king James of Arragon. The lady, our mother, told us that the Omnipotent Christ showed prodigies of his power, on the night of our conception. Dreadful thunder, and flames of fire, and sheets of hail broke over Barcelona that night, so that wild beasts fled from the woods, and mountains, and came terrified to the shore. The earth trembled, and the sea roared, and swelled to a fearful height; the citizens filled the courts of the palace, and there came an old man, and said to our lord father, Seigneur, I am a hermit and my dwelling is on Mount Serrat; and I have come to you, led by the Good Spirit. I had gone some distance from my cave, to a spot called 'Saxum vitæ,' looking for roots of herbs, my accustomed food. And while I remained this night under the rock praying, a voice came to me saying, 'a wondrous fruit has been conceived.' And soon after, the priest of the palace came to the queen, our mother, and said, 'Lady, I left my bed in terror, and entering the chapel, I prostrated myself before the sacred altar;' and I heard a voice, saying, 'A lion is conceived, which will be great amongst the people.' The queen, too, our mother, had a wondrous vision to the effect. Behold, then, in process of time I was born, and as I grew up, I was trained to sacred worship, and to faith in Christ; and I was taught the art of war; and when I was eighteen years old, I was, by the grace of Christ, united in legitimate marriage to Constantia, moved by whose tears I have now taken up arms, to revenge the death of her father. And see to what casualties of war, and to what perils I have not feared to expose myself. And know, that to her for whose sake I have done this, and to Christ, who is the Giver of grace, I have promised, that as my cause is holy, so shall be my life; nor will I indulge in voluptuous repose, until the tears of my Constantia shall have ceased to flow, and until she shall have obtained full justice in the punishment of traitors, and satisfaction for her father's death." After thus saying, he was silent; and the woman replied, "Seigneur, how old are you? And of what age is your wife, whom you love so much?" And the king replied, "That he was fifty-three, and the queen

thirty-seven years of age." The woman said no more, but retired, supposing that the king would do the same ; but he took up his arms, and roused his men, and prepared to set forth. She then, unwillingly, followed them ; but from that hour she became his implacable enemy, and left no stone unturned to estrange her husband from him, and to undermine the stability of his new power. This interview took place on the 2nd of October, in the year 1282.\*

The historians of the middle age are ridiculed by the moderns for having recorded such numberless instances of supernatural agency ; but it should be remembered, that they always evince an intimate conviction, that the great surpassing miracle of their times, was the number of rich men that entered into the kingdom of heaven. If we now descend to lower ranks, we are presented with direct evidence, not only of purity and decorum of manners, but of the most fervent exercise of all the Christian duties. Thus we find St. Theresa, speaking of a very honest merchant of Toledo, named "Martin Ramirer," who led an exemplary life ; being sincere and faithful in his commerce, and thinking of augmenting his goods, only in order to perform more works agreeable to God ; and elsewhere speaking of another merchant of Toledo, named Alphonso of Avila, who, like the former, being unmarried, was only occupied in assisting prisoners, and performing other good works.†

In addition to these sources, we have likewise a class of documents, consisting in general views of the manners of society in different countries, presented by writers of the middle age, as the result of their personal observations, which are very remarkable.

In the twelfth century, before Frederick openly disputed against the Church, and the names of Guelph and Ghibelline were known, the citizens of Bologna are described as contending with each other only in zeal for virtue. "Friendship was then the boast of youth, nor was that purity of manners affected by the clouds of fleshly concupiscence, which obscure the heart and prevent the serenity of love from being distinguished from the darkness of lust. The fruits of love were then conversations, innocent mirth, and deeds of benevolence ; the delight which charmed was to read sweet books, side by side, to labor together, to dissent sometimes from each other without hate,—as when a man debates with himself,—to teach and to learn mutually, to desire the absent with modesty, and to hail the present with joy. This abundance of a loving heart was manifested by the tongue, the eyes, and a thousand graceful motions. Then, in every house, were found honest shame, and continence, and conjugal love, and virtuous sobriety and moderation. The dignity of families did not depend upon riches, which were rare in Italian houses, but on the number and honor of their members. Manners were simple and redolent of the antique world, so that men rose from ban-

\* Bartholomæ de Neocastro *Historia Sicula*, cap. 41. apud Muratori *Rer. Italic. Scriptorum*, tom. XIII.

† Foundation of the Carmelite Monast. of Toledo.



quets to study or to business, for which their temperate feast only gave them a greater relish. Liberty was retained and cherished, as part of human good, though sometimes there was more peril in restoring than happiness in possessing it, and to good men liberty was never wanting.”\*

Ambrose Leo draws such a picture of the inhabitants of Nola in his age, that he quite transports his reader into a terrestrial paradise, and makes him imagine that he wanders amidst the sweet villas and gardens of that courteous, benign, and hospitable people, “in whose manners are combined,” he says, “the strictest chastity and temperance, with the utmost elegance and refinement. No factions, quarrels, treasons, or murders, ever disturb that serene state, from which no outcast of vicious life, in whom lust or avarice sways reason, is ever seen in any town of Italy. Here men are tillers of the ground, and content with their lot; so that rarely any inhabitant wishes to travel, or lose sight of the city towers, or pass beyond the sound of their bells. Lorenzo Bulino, a youth, was absent with me during three days, and afterwards coming back, when we arrived at the city gate, he jumped from his horse and kissed it, as during the whole journey he continually declared he would do, if God should grant him a happy return.”†

In the great collection of Italian antiquities by Grævius and Burmann, there is a remarkable description of Callipolis, in the Japygian land, and of the manners of that people, given by the celebrated philosopher and most learned physician Antonio Galateo. “Here,” saith he, “men are most pure, most moral, not liars, not rapacious, not seditious, not intemperate, not ambitious, and, what Plato ascribes to maritime cities, not unjust, nor fraudulent, but veracious, faithful, abstemious, contented, charitable; and, notwithstanding the sea and the multitude of mercenary troops, and the influx of foreigners, preserving their integrity and constancy. In peace, mild, tractable, and humane; and of their bravery in war, the Venetians, Spaniards, and French can best speak. The education of boys and young men is liberal and modest. Arrogance and insolence are not found amongst our youth, who are full of love for one another, and benevolence. But what is above all important, the people are not negligent of religion and the divine worship; St. Agatha, patroness of the city, they piously venerate, and what we have such difficulty to persuade the sick to do, these people, whether about to live or die, of their own accord, have constant recourse to the sacraments. The virtue of the women corresponds to these manners; they are chaste, industrious, and obedient. On holidays they stay much at home; on other days they spin. The beauty and exquisite grace of our maidens are only equalled by their modesty. No one sees them at a window; no one ever receives from them a gesture or a look to embolden dishonest thoughts. At thirteen, you will find few unmarried. Good men, and lovers of truth, cannot pass over in silence the virtue of an

\* Barth. Dulcini de vario Bononiæ statu. Lib. IV. Theaur. Antiq. Italiæ, VII.

† Ambros. Leonis de Nola, Lib. III. c. 6. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. tom. IX.

enemy. The Venetians are not styled most Christian, yet, when they took our city, as true Christians and Italians, they respected the women, and guarded them diligently in the church of St. Agatha; they abstained from slaughter and destruction, and wished to give up their captives. Upon the whole, my Summonti, I know of no city more capable of serving the purposes of a happy life, if one knows how to enjoy it; none more fit for a sweet and tranquil existence. Here are no affairs but domestic, and those not considerable; no tumults but those of the sea and the winds; here are no seditions, no strifes or very rarely, no proud thresholds, no excess of pleasures or of riches to corrupt manners; here is equal justice,—that oft-depicted, long sought and wished for *ισονομία*, grateful, as Plato says, to God and men. Here is the image and shadow of that holy city which will be in heaven, and which from heaven to earth has never descended. There is, indeed, between high and low, nobles and people, a certain distance here, but it is such as philosophers, and Plato himself would praise; not too great, not proud, not contumelious, which holy men abominate, so that one should be thirsty and another drunken, one able to touch heaven with his head and another sunk down to the abyss; here is neither servitude nor licence, but a certain moderate equality; there is degree as to race, riches, dignity, magistracy, for absolute equality is the greatest inequality; but as far as justice and freedom require, there is true equality. Here are few dissensions, few insane clamors, few crimes, few hatreds, no deceits, no prisons; here we live without envy, without ambition, without pride, without injury, without luxury; we have neither superfluities nor distress. Here one lives without fear and in the utmost concord, as in a citadel. There are no taxes. We enjoy a salubrious air, delicious prospects over sea and land: here I live temperately, and enjoy athletic vigor. At the ninth or tenth hour of the night I rise, and employ myself in writing or reading before sun-rise; if it be a festival or a vigil, I go to the church of St. Agatha; if it be not, I pray at home. At the first light I walk forth and visit the sick. Then I dine, and afterwards study or receive those who wish to consult me respecting their health. At the twentieth hour I again go forth to visit the sick, and return home at nightfall, where are always some of no deficiency in genius waiting to converse with me, on philosophy, on manners, or on mathematics. Such is the life of your Galateus, such the city which he inhabits.”\*

Methinks this picture of the real state of Otranto, can inspire as much delight as that which represents its romantic history. Nor are these general discourses mere panegyrics. Bernardin Gomisius describes the different provinces of Spain, without concealing the peculiar vices of each people. “The Valencians,” saith he, “are of a mercurial and hasty disposition, joyous, and infantine, from abounding so much in the natural goods of life, so that they are said to be mindful neither of the past nor future, being satisfied with the present; whereas the people of Arra-

\* Ant. Galatei Callipolis descriptio apud Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, tom. IX.

gon always gloried in the past, and in the fame of their ancestors, despising the present, and preserving untouched their ancient laws. The Catalonians, inhabiting a sterile soil, are solicitous about the future, so as scarcely to think of the present, and, therefore, they are more liberal than the others; so that they almost surpass all other Christians in bounty to the poor of Christ, and in the pomp of divine worship being truly cheerful givers, and never more joyous than when they can confer benefits; and though voluble and inconstant, often to their own injury, yet they evince with all an admirable goodness, and being corrected by reason and art, they are on that account only the more capable of excellent things; for the youth are removed far from the indulgence of parents, and initiated in the severe principles of the Christian discipline. To these happy effects many things conduce; strict laws rigidly enforced, the exemplary lives of many most grave citizens, models of manners for imitation, and that inherent religion of the state, which impels them to piety and to the exercise of all social virtues, by means of which the mobility of their minds, instead of leading to inconstancy and temerity, reduces them to better fruit of life, to gravity and perseverance.”\*

In like manner John Vasaëus, another Spanish historian, expresses his admiration of the frugality and modesty of all the youth of Salamanca, while Don John Guignonio held the office of chancellor.† “I dwelt fifty years in Spain,” says Lucius Marinæus, the Sicilian, “and I never saw an instance of intemperance.”‡ Torquemade speaks of an inhabitant of Salamanca who went to Toledo and returned, having been absent fifteen or twenty days, during which time he had never tasted wine.§ The manners of Spain were not then singular in this respect, for in few countries was the race of men numerous, that would have disdained the suitors of Penelope for mixing water with their wine.|| It was not till the decline of faith in Germany, that there was a return to the ancient manners ascribed to it by Tacitus, when he says, “diem noctemque continuare potando nulli probum.”¶ In the decrees collected by Ives de Chartres, a penance of forty days was imposed upon any one who made another drunk, and if accustomed to give such invitations, he was to be deprived of Communion.\*\* Charlemagne, by one of his capitularies, had forbidden, under severe penalty, this custom of encouraging others to drink at banquets.

In France, when intemperance first became common, in the year 1536, the penalty of banishment and the loss of ears was denounced against drunkards, on being convicted four times. Imprisonment, on bread and water, being the punishment for the first offence.

We may close these general observations by remarking that the opinion of the

\* Bernardini Gomesii de Vita Jacobi I. Arragon. Lib. XII.

† Joan. Vasaëi Brugensis Rer. Hispanicarum, Chronic. c. 3.

‡ Lucii Marinai de Rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. V.

§ Hexameron d'Anthoine Torquemade, trad. par Chapuis Roma, 1625. | Od. I. 110.

¶ De Moribus Germanorum.

\*\* Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. 83.



sophists respecting the comparative merit of national manners, where the new opinions were established, and those of Catholic countries, was in general contemptuously rejected by all writers on their side who were raised above the vulgar. "I fled to Italy," says Milton, in answer to the charge of his accuser, "not as to the place of refuge to the profligate, but because I knew and had found before, that it is the retreat of civility and of all polite learning."\*

---

### CHAPTER III.



WE cannot proceed further without taking another glance at the interior life of families during the middle ages, in order to ascertain in what degree domestic manners corresponded with the blessed thirst, and what were the fruits of justice which peculiarly distinguished them. Niebuhr says it is exceedingly interesting to catch a glimpse of the every day transactions of antiquity ; and if so grave a writer can find it so, in relation to such details as the business of witnesses at sales in pagan Rome, surely there is nothing in the mere fact of heathenism having been superseded by Christianity, that can render the manners and household economy of the middle ages unworthy of an historian's regard.

"Never, perhaps," says a modern French writer, "was the virtue of domestic life recommended and described with more esteem and charm than during the middle ages. It was not merely celebrated by the poets. It is clear, from a crowd of witnesses, that the public thought like the poets, and formed the same judgment respecting these kind of actions."† That exquisite intermingling of philosophy and religion, passion and domestic fondness, which some pronounced to be the true desideratum of the virtuous mind, and the best earthly consummation of our imperfect nature, forms at least one of the peculiar characteristics of those times. In this respect the manners of the middle ages seem to have existed with all their force in Spain, until the entrance of the French spirit in modern times; an epoch which henceforth should be designated as "the slaughter of Spain."

"The social and domestic life of the Spaniards," says Huber, "is distinguished by a freshness, and simplicity, and freedom, to a degree beyond, perhaps, what can be found with any other European people. The kind of ease and equal-

\* Second Defence of the people of England.

† Guizot, Cours d'Hist. tom. IV. 6.

ity which characterizes society, is almost unknown in other lands. In the Tertulla, on the Paseo, on the public walk, the artisan, the merchant, the officer, the civilian, the clergy of every rank, the noble, the marquis, and count, converse with each other on a footing of the most perfect equality. It is worthy of remark," he continues, "that this equality prevails in an equal degree even among women, who, in other countries, so often discharge the unamiable office of priestesses to the pride of nobility, wealth, office, or title. Nevertheless, from what is here said respecting social freedom and equality, it must not be inferred that there is any confusion of degree, or any indication of individual vanity overstepping the just limits of place and rank in the community. For the most part, the independence of the lower classes has never in Spain, the haughty, aggressive, insolent tone, which in France and England, is so often found alternating with cringing servility."

"We have seen," says Rubichon, "states presenting sword in hand popular institutions, or what were called such. And what states? those in which the nourishment of the poor is confided to persons to whom the nourishment of horses and dogs would never have been confided. And presenting them to whom? To Spain, Portugal, and Italy, whose pontiffs, sovereigns, and grantees, are objects of mockery in these foreign states, on account of the simplicity of their manners, and of their familiarity with the lowest of the people and the poor."\*

The Roman satirist describes the insolence with which the rich treated their poorer guests and clients, to whom were always offered food and wine of an inferior quality, and who were not allowed to speak with freedom, as if they were invited to cause mirth to the company.† It was not so in Catholic ages, at the baronial court. Stephen Pasquier, speaking of the singular felicity of the President de Thou, who was born of a noble race, honored by his king, and no less by the people, says that his table and conversation were generally with the middle classes, and that the moment he came home, he used to lay aside all the grandeur of his state. He never supped from home, and he used to retire to bed at nine o'clock and rise very early, being always his own chamberlain. He used with great simplicity to return from the palace unattended,‡ a custom which would now be termed profaning the dignity of his office, and dragging its insignia through the mire.

Homer represents Telemachus as a model of filial inferiority and obedience, always instantaneously submitting to his father's nod; and one might suppose that the answer which Dionysius Halicarnassus ascribes to the Horatii, when Tullus desired them to say whether they were willing to fight the Curatii, for the defence of their country, had been taken from some monastic or feudal historian. "O, Tullus, if we had power to determine this question for ourselves," said the eldest, speaking

\* Du Mécanisme de la Société en France et en Angleterre, 320.

† Juv. Sat. V.

‡ Lettres, Lib. VII. 10.

for the rest, "we should answer you without delay ; but since our father is still living, without whom we do not think it right to say or to do the least thing, οὐδὲ τάλάχιστα λέγειν ἢ πράττειν ἀξιούμεν, we must beg a little delay, that we may consult with him."\* Atticus declared, at his mother's funeral, that he had never been reconciled to her ; by which he meant, that he had never given her displeasure so as to require forgiveness. All this seems worthy of the filial piety which was so prominent a feature in Catholic manners during ages of faith, before men had been taught or encouraged to throw away respect, traditions, forms, and ceremonious duty. "With his father and mother, honoring them as a true Catholic son, he lies here interred," says the epitaph on Martial d'Auvergne.† Octavian de Saint Gelais, shows himself another of these Catholic sons, when expressing his horror on seeing, in a vision, his father's spirit among those that had made shipwreck on the perilous worldly sea.

"Ha que moult fut mon cœur plein de douleur  
Quant j'avisai se chevaloureux corps.  
Car pour certain c'estoit mon très-cher père,  
Que vy noyé en mondaine misère."

His first impression prompted him to leap into the sea and embrace his father in the waves, but an interior voice forbade him, declaring that there was no remedy.‡ The extraordinary love which Pope Urban the Fourth evinced for the Cistercian monastery of Nôtre Dame des Prez, in the diocese of Troyes, was said to have arisen from the circumstance of his mother having been buried within it.§

Certainly, it speaks much in proof of the filial reverence which prevailed in the middle ages, to observe how many churches and monasteries, the building of which had been commenced by fathers and mothers, were, after their death, completed by the voluntary piety of their children.|| Behold a scene represented by Ratpert in his history of St. Gall. Wolfleoz, bishop of Constance, after afflicting Cotzpert, abbot of that monastery, in diverse manners, denied to the monks their right of free election ; and knowing that their own charters had been burnt, cited them to appear with him before the Emperor Lewis, in whose presence he produced a charter from his own collection, which he ordered to be read ; but, through mistake, his minister had brought a different document from what he had intended, so that he produced a charter that had been granted by Charlemagne, in the time of Bishop John, which was decisive in favor of the monks. This diploma was no sooner opened, than the Emperor recognized the seal of his father, when he immediately raised it to his lips with veneration, and then delivered it to be presented to all who were present, that it might be kissed by every one in sign of honor.

\* Antiquit. Roman. Lib. III. c. 17.

† Gouget, Bibliothèque Française. Tom. X. 40.

‡ Gouget, Bibliothèque Française, tom. X. 267.

§ Hist. du Diocese de Troyes, 362.

|| Italia sacra, passim.



After this act of filial reverence, he ordered the charter to be read, and decided in conformity to his father's will.\* A contrary spirit was regarded with universal horror. S. Peter Damian writes from the desert, to censure Albert, a great and powerful nobleman of that time, because tidings have reached him that, at the instigation of his wife, he does not treat his own mother with sufficient respect.† When the Marquis of Cadiz, on entering Ronda, hastened to deliver his unfortunate companions in arms from the dungeons of the fortress, he found many of them almost naked, with irons at their ankles, and having beards reaching to their waists : there were several young men of noble families, who, with filial piety, had surrendered themselves prisoners in place of their fathers.

"The benedictions," says Stephen Pasquier, "which we give our children, do not depend only upon a sign of the cross which we make on them, when by that exterior mark we commend them to God ; and as for malediction, though we do not curse them, yet still if there be within us any secret evil opinion of them, though it had only a simple color of justice, it is an unhappy prognostic of their future life."‡ Of the authority of parents and of husbands, a very high sense was certainly entertained, "*Filii uxorque qui non venerantur illum, sed æquales se exhibent, quamvis egregie ament, pro monstris tamen habendi sunt,*" says Cardan,§ and Marsilius Ficinus speaks to the same effect in his treatise *De Officiis*, addressed to Cherubin Quarquatio.|| If, however, the expectations of parents were great it must be confessed, that they were seldom deficient in fulfilling those duties which entitled them to the devotional love and reverence of their children. Pythagoras assigned as chief cause for revering parents, that it is from them men receive the worship of the Deity ;¶ and though since the latter days of grace, the worship of God has never been depending upon domestic traditions, yet the exact discharge of the religious duties of Christian parents, was regarded, during the middle ages, as justifying a claim to more gratitude than could be due on the ground of having transmitted any secular or material advantage. Thus Charles de Bourgueville, in his researches on the antiquities of Normandy, speaking of his own origin, and of his being born of noble parents, observes, that "he considers his being received into the society of Christians by baptism, as the most signal favor that was ever bestowed upon him;"\*\* and Hieronymus Rubeus, the noble and learned physician who wrote the history of Ravenna, seems chiefly grateful to his father, from remembering his custom of leading him frequently, when a boy, to see a venerable blind priest, Antonio Monnetulo, who impressed him with such reverence, that he says, "I would never have quitted his side if I could have had leave. On feast days after vespers, this holy man," saith he, "used to preach in the convent of the good Jesus at Ravenna, sitting in the middle of the church ; but at home every day he used to exhort those who came to see him, who were not few, to embrace a holy

\* Raperti de casibus S. Gali apud. Goldast, Rer. Alleman. tom. I. † Epist. 3. Lib. VIII.

‡ Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. XI. 3. § De Sapientia. Lib. II. ¶ Epist. Lib. III.

¶ Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 8

\*\* Les Recherches et Antiq. de Normandie.

life, as true Christians and Catholics. You would see crowds flocking to converse with him : and I knew another such old man, Crispoldo, at Rome, though not blind, who was always similarly shut up in a blessed little room, where he was constantly either meditating or speaking, or reading, or writing about divine things.”\* Nobility itself was preserved and transmitted more by means of parental admonitions than by descent of blood ; for as the old pilgrims would say, “*vie debonnaire, juste et sainte retient l’homme en honneur, sans jamais avoir deshonneur.*”† It would have been well for some families in modern times, even in regard to worldly honor, if, as in the palace of Priam, there had been an altar in the centre of the house ! Nothing can be more admirable than the instructions which we find the parents of the middle ages giving to their children.

Hear how Stephen Pasquier writes to his son Peter, who was a young soldier—“Be sober, gentle, affable, and prize the blessing of the poor people. Above all, blaspheme not the name of God. It is a heresy, and a detestable opinion, that oaths and blasphemies become valor, whereas modesty in word and deed is its greatest ornament.”‡ Hear again his counsel to his son Theodore, whom he had educated for the bar : “If you would be a good pleader be a just and good man ; for you will easily persuade those who believe you to be such ; but if you have an evil reputation, all the eloquence of Cicero and Demosthenes will serve you nothing. Never undertake a cause which you do not believe to be good. Combat for truth, not for victory ; but all this is included in the first qualification. I do not merely wish you to be a just man, I want this justice to be armed with a living force to hurl vice to the earth, to sustain the afflicted poor, to meet fearlessly the efforts of the most powerful, who would abuse their grandeur. Let all courtier-like fear of displeasing the great be far from you ; for though you may offend them for time, they will afterwards choose you for their advocate, because you faithfully served your clients against them. It is sinning against the Holy Ghost to nourish your clients with false hopes, in order that the cause may be protracted. Perhaps your practice will be less for this, but it will be more secure and more honorable. Let your pleadings be modest in regard to your opponents, but without prevarication. Spare, however, their shame. Be avaricious, not of money, but of honor. Thus conducting yourself, I commit the care of your fortune to God, whom you should implore in all your actions, and he will never leave those who call upon him with a devout heart.”§

The letters of that illustrious nobleman and philosopher, John Picus of Mirandula, to his nephew, John Francis, present another admirable picture of the spirit of domestic relations in that age—“It is a folly,” he says to him, “not to believe in the Gospel, whose truth is proclaimed by the blood of martyrs, whose prodigies resound on apostolic tongues, which reason confirms, the world attests,

\* Hieron. Rubei Hist. Ravennatum, Lib. IX.

† Le grant Voyage de Jerusalem, CVIII.

‡ Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. XI. 3.

§ Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. IX. 6.

the elements proclaim, the demons confess; but it is a still greater folly, if you do not doubt of the truth of the Gospel, and yet live as if you did not doubt that it was false: for if it be true that 'it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God,' why should we thirst after riches? If it be true that not the glory which is from men ought to be desired, but that which is from God, why should we hang upon the judgments of men? If what Christ affirms of his future coming be true, why should we fear nothing less than hell, or hope for nothing with less ardor than heaven?"\* Subsequently we find this virtuous nephew, John Francis, writing to exhort a relation to persevere in conforming his manners to the rule of Christ, and accounting for his giving such admonition on the ground of necessity of blood, ancient custom, and especial love.†

- French writers of the time of Louis XIV. were generally inclined to judge with severity whatever belonged to the middle ages, yet Gouget, speaking of Champier's work entitled "the testament of an old prince, which, at the end of his days he left to his son, to instruct him how to follow virtue and to fly from sin," admits that "the precepts are useful and solid, and well calculated to promote piety and the fear of God."‡ Nor was it merely children who were thus admonished by their parents; all dependents were similarly instructed in the respective duties of their state, and urged to play not the part of idle truants, omitting the sweet benefits of time to clothe their age with angel-like perfection. Thus we read of Francis Borgia passing his youth in the house of his father, the Duke of Gandia, that he was bred up "amongst the domestics in wonderful innocence and piety." In fact in the castles of the middle age, if you will credit Marchangy, the pages themselves were often little saints,§ while, as at the castle of Vincennes, there were angels in stone carved over the gate. "The Seigneur de Ligny led Bayard home with him," says an ancient writer, "and in the evening preached to him as if he had been his own son, recommending him to have honor always before his eyes."||

Truly beautiful does the fidelity of chivalrous youth appear in the page of history or romance. Every master of a family in the middle ages, had some young man in his service who would have rejoiced to shed the last drop of his blood to save him, and who, like Jonathan's armor bearer, would have replied to his summons, "Fac omnia quæ placent animo tuo: perge quo cupis, et ero tecum ubicumque volueris."¶ When Gyron le Courtois resolved to proceed on the adventure of the Passage périlleux, we read that the varlet on hearing the frankness and courtesy with which his lord spoke to him, began to weep abundantly, and said all in tears, "Sire, know that my heart tells me, that sooth if you proceed farther, you will never return; that you will either perish there, or you will remain in prison; but nathless, nothing shall prevent me from going with you. Better die

\* Johan Picus Mirandula Epist. Lib. I.

† Epist. Lib. III.

‡ Bibliothèq. Française, tom. X. 217.

§ Tristan, vol. V.

|| La très joyeuse hystoire du bon Chev. Bayart, chap. 9.

¶ 1 Reg. c. 14.



with you, if it be God's will, than leave you in such guise to save my own life ;" and so saying, he stepped forward and said, "Sire, since you will not return, according to my advice, I will not leave you this time, come to me what may." Authority in the houses of the middle ages was always venerable. The very term *seneschal*, is supposed to have implied old knight, so that, as with the Greeks, the word signifying to honor, and to pay respect, was derived immediately from that which denoted old age—*πρεσβέω* being thus used in the first line of the *Eumenides*.\* Even to those who were merely attached by the bonds of friendship or hospitality, the same lessons and admonitions were considered due. John Francis Pieus, of *Mirandula*, mentions his uncle's custom of frequently admonishing his friends, exhorting them to a holy life. "I knew a man," he says, "who once spoke with him on the subject of manners, and who was so much moved by only two words from him which alluded to the death of Christ as the motive for avoiding sin, that from that hour he renounced the ways of vice, and reformed his whole life and manner."†

Giles of Colonna shows the advantage of having holy books read aloud, in the vulgar idiom, during the repasts of the family. Henry Suso, of the family of the Counts of Mons, who became afterwards a Dominican friar, and an eminent ascetic philosopher, dying in the odor of sanctity at Ulm, in the year 1365, was first excited to serve God with fervor, by hearing the sweet invitations with which eternal wisdom allures a soul to receive her inestimable treasure, read at the baronial table. Thus the Book of Wisdom used to be read at the banquet of the feudal castle, and, as the present example shows, often to hearers of a true heroic stamp, full of noble enthusiasm for all justice. This youth, not able to contain himself, burst aloud into the following exclamations: "Oh, I will set myself with all my power to procure this happy wisdom. If I am possessed of it I am the happiest of men. I will desire, I will seek, I will ask for nothing else. She herself invites me. Adieu, all other thoughts and pursuits. I will never cease praying and conjuring, with all the ardor of my soul, this divine wisdom to visit me." What, think you, must have been the banquet hall of an *Ansold*, son of Peter, seigneur of *Maule*, that renowned warrior of the eleventh century, who, as *Orderic Vitalis* says, was "almost equal to philosophers in his discourse, who used to frequent the churches, lending an attentive and judicious ear to the sacred sermons, committing to memory the lives of the fathers, which he heard recited, detesting all lying narrations, as well as the authors who changed the word of God, and publicly refuting their wicked sophisms."‡

Perhaps I shall be condemned as fanciful, but I cannot avoid recognizing justice even in that air of melancholy which, as we before observed, encompassed the feudal towers, and left some trace of its action in all the forms and manners of domestic life in the middle ages. It will not surprise me if those who have aban-

\* *Æschyl.*† *In vita ejus.*‡ *Orderic Vital. Lib. V.*

done Catholic thoughts and manners should receive such a suggestion with disdain ; for in general when they look sadly, it is for want of money ; and those that are sad, like Shakespeare's young philosopher, betray themselves to every censure worse than drunkards ; but I remark that the blessed St. Francis, who cultivated the cheerful spirit, and the heart's joy as one of the choicest effects of the soul's union with God, took care to distinguish it from that disposition which seeks to promote laughter, and he recommended this noble poetic gravity as a defence against the darts of the demon. One who is profoundly versed in the character of the middle ages, might almost suppose that society had then been formed on the views of these later philosophers who say, that piety is extinguished in laughter, and that what men call laughter is nothing else but atheism pure : in corroboration of which opinion, the fact undoubtedly may be noticed, that it was always by a laughing generation, and men of Tyrrhian wit, that the Catholic religion was proscribed. Pause now for a moment, reader, before any of those old portraits. What a look is there ! Do you not read " the soul's long thirst," that sadness which Malebranche says is of itself always agreeable ;\* the train of thought, too, which is ascribed to Jacques by Shakespeare, when he speaks of " loving to cope him in those fits when he is full of matter ? " Do you not read, in short, the desire of justice in that countenance which so nobly yokes a smiling with a sigh ? May we not again to justice, to the deep sensibility of the middle age, trace that tragic dignity with which even the dwellings of men were then invested ? Love and death had left many marks of their power and of their woe upon the wind-braving towers of the ancestral mansion. You have only to visit any castle of the middle ages, to feel the force of this remark. Witness that of Blois, within the walls of which died Valentine of Milan ; wife of Louis, Count of Blois ; Philip of Orleans, their third son ; Elizabeth of Francis, daughter of Charles VI., widow of Richard, king of England, and wife of Charles, Count of Blois ; Pierre d'Amboise, bishop of Poitiers, brother of the cardinal ; Laurent Bureau, confessor to Louis XII. ; John de Garnai, chancellor of France under Louis XII. ; Andrew Navagiero, ambassador of Venice ; John of Orleans, of the poison given to him returning from the siege of la Rochelle ; Antoine Bohier, cardinal archbishop of Bourges ; Anne of Orleans, abbess of Fonteverault ; Charlotte, daughter of Francis I. ; the queens Anne of Bretagne and Catherine de Medicis, and the illustrious princes of the house of Guise.\*

I enumerate these instances to show how, in general, the houses of our ancestors were historical ; for the king's palace had no privilege in this respect over the house of any private citizen or gentleman : and if all houses had this solemn aspect in consequence of their being alike ancestral and full of local domestic traditions, from what other cause can it have arisen but the principle of stability, and

\* Recherche de la vérité, Lib. III.

† Bernier Hist. de Blois, 22.

regard to paternal remembrances, which assuredly form a part of human justice and which were so essentially characteristic of Catholic manners? Some long-loved secret marks, a cross, a letter scratched, connected with the memory of a revered parent, might be traced upon these portals. There was something on the face of these grey walls, which a beloved eye in former days had loved to watch; therefore the towers and pillars were suffered silently to clothe themselves in black, one after the other, like mourners, that attended the procession to a grave. The moss-grown battlements seemed to proclaim, that of many successive lords the worm slept in the tomb spinning there its thread round their humid crowns. At moments men felt a sudden awe at the kind of sepulchral gravity of their solemn gates. Each new generation asked, at intervals, why they wore such a brow amidst the banquet and the song—

“By day the tourney, and by night  
The merry dance, traced fast and light  
The masquers quaint, the pageant bright,  
The revel loud and long.”

It was, as Michelet would say, that history was in them: ages weighed them down, and, as it were, the hereditary traditional experience of the world's woe. The material dwelling was thus a symbol of the mind of its inhabitants; and can you question whether in that particular feature it did not partake of justice? Look around you, and compare the men who preserve with those who destroy the paternal dwelling, and then judge. No, this opinion is not fanciful: the manners, and even the material monuments of the middle age have a mourning aspect; but if we before proved that for man it was happy, we might here demonstrate that it was also strictly just to mourn.

With respect to the administration and government of families it should be observed that neither in the original law, nor in the spirit with which it was observed, was there wanting indication of a general and predominant sense of justice. According to the system of primogeniture, the eldest son was possessed rather than a possessor. Duties are imposed upon him: according to the strong expression of the middle ages “il faut qu'il serve son fief.” It should be remembered that fiefs were originally given to men of arms, who were bound to defend the state. When citizens, who had nothing to do with arms, acquired fiefs, kings required that instead of the military service which was due from them, taxes should be raised on all such persons, and hence the exemption of nobles, and the obligation of those that were not noble, to pay taxes. When the military service ceased, rich men sought to obtain letters of nobility, founded on the antiquity of race,\* and all the abuses followed, which before the French revolution had brought the feudal institutions into such contempt; but an attentive and impartial consideration of their origin and principle, will

\* Pasquier *Recherches de la France*, Lib. II. 17.



go far to exculpate them from the charge of partiality and injustice. Nevertheless, Pasquier, while praising the law of primogeniture, calling it wholly Platonic, and observing that it has brought great profit to the kingdom of France, remarks, that it was not admitted under the first two races of their kings.\* At all events, the general spirit of society, in consequence of the ecclesiastical influence, tended to remove whatever was unamiable or unessential in the domestic government, and in the privileges conferred by legislation. Hugo de St. Victor proceeds farther than even the most sincere lover of justice would require. "Does nature," he asks, "thus divide the merits of children? She bestows equally on all whence they can have the means of loving. She herself teaches you, O parents, not to divide unequally your patrimony between them; but you should grant to them all an equal inheritance."† There was a patriarchal dominion which, in the sweet spirit of Catholic manners, bound all members of a family together by the strongest and most loving ties. What a picture is that which Ambrose Leo gives of Gabriel Mastrilli, a senator of Nola, who was beloved by the clergy and people, whom he had seen in his eightieth year sitting at the head of his table, having seated before him eighty-one persons, all his children, or those sprung from them, whom he made a point of entertaining thus every year, insisting that they should all sit at one table, while he from the end might behold them with delight and gratitude. Among them were senators, knights, judges, priests, one of whom was a bishop, monks, physicians, merchants, and one hermit, Bernardine, who had renounced his profession of the law through a love of solitude.‡

We have indeed only to open any chronicle of the middle ages, or even any chivalrous romance, to meet with some passage that cannot but charm by the insight which it furnishes into the domestic virtues of the ages of faith. It could not, in fact, have been otherwise, for these virtues were identical with faith. "That the social life is a life of wisdom, we," says St. Augustin, "hold even more than the philosophers; for whence could this city of God find its beginning, or arrive at its appointed end, if it were not for the social life of the saints?"§

At one time the Church is obliged to defend her doctrine against heretics, who would abolish marriage, "*οἶκος μὲν γὰρ ἐκ γένους συνίσταται*," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "*πόλεις δὲ ἐξ οἴκων*." "Holy is the generation," he continues, "through which the world subsists, through which are natures, through which are angels, through which are powers, through which are souls, through which are the commandments, through which is the law, through which is the Gospel, through which is the knowledge of God. Without the body how could the economy of the Church respecting us be accomplished?"|| It is an invincible truth, that whatever is anti-Catholic, is also anti-social; and, indeed, the general

\* Id. Lib. II. c. 18.

† Hugo de St. Victor. Institut. Monasticæ de Bestiis et aliis Rebus, Lib. c. III. 85.

‡ Amb. Leonis, de Nola, Lib. III. § Thesaur. Antiq. Italic. tom. IX.

|| De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIX. 5.

¶ Stromat. Lib. III. c. 15. c. 17.

idea arising from the Catholic doctrine of the sanctity of the marriage state, alone explains the secret of manners in the middle age. Confronted with the might and influence of licentious princes, it is here that the morality of the Catholic Church appears in all its grandeur, for the passions of bold and powerful men could make no permanent resistance to the ecclesiastical law, which spoke with the calm majesty of eternal justice.

"When Richard the First, duke of Normandy, four years before his death, desired that his second son, Robert, should be made Archbishop of Rouen, having signified his wish to the chapter of that church, he received for answer, that it was impossible to comply with his wishes, in consequence of the illegitimacy of his son's birth, since, by the canonical discipline, he was on that account incapable of being admitted even to orders, or of holding any benefice. This obstacle opened Richard's eyes, and made him discover in his conscience a sin, which the flattery of courtiers would have concealed from him. In order to repair the scandal, the duke and the mother presented themselves humbly in the church, and received the benediction of marriage."\*

In Catholic times, men would not have spoken of the profane uses of common life, for they well knew, without having read the later philosophers, that common life also had a holiness of its own. St. Augustin says, "You praise God when you are working in your own affairs; you praise God when you take food and drink; you praise him when you are resting in your bed; you praise him when you sleep."† "They also that were married," as Clemens Alexandrinus says, "were able to please God, and to give him thanks, thinking how they might be holy in body and spirit."‡

The houses of our Catholic ancestors were not like the patrician halls of Rome, where every thing was occult and treacherous, nothing frank or sincere. In a former book, I showed that feudal life was compatible with the manners of the blessed meek; and here, if we briefly investigate it in relation to the beatific thirst, we shall arrive at the conclusion that it was no less capable of being combined with justice, and with the most affectionate obedience to the whole law of God. "For in limine, there was nothing in the Christian discipline," as St. Clemens of Alexandria remarks, "which forbade men to be rich well *καλῶς πλουτεῖν*; but they were only forbidden to be rich unjustly and immeasurably."§ The holy fathers show, not only that property is allowable, but that it is even necessary for the fulfilment of several divine precepts, such as those which command men to feed the hungry, and to make friends of the mammon of injustice, and they remark that Zaccheus, who received our Lord, was himself a son of Abraham.||

The political disputes which agitate modern society, had all been set at rest by the positive principles of religion during the middle ages. Giles of Colonna

\* Bernier, Hist. d'Evreux, 80.

† In Psalm. 146.

‡ Stromat. Lib. III.

§ Stromat. c. 9.

|| Clemens Alex. Lib. Quis dives Salvetur.

proves against Plato, that private possessions are of nature and utility,\* and that property should not be equally divided among the citizens of the state, as Phaleas proposed.† The blessed doctor shows that it would be contrary to nature, and impossible to render it equal by law; and that if it were possible, such an act would be injurious to the whole state, and to each citizen in particular, and destructive of virtue. He shows that the chief intention of a legislator ought to be, not the equalization of property, as Phaleas maintained, but the repression of concupiscence, which is the root of all evil;‡ that although the thirst for possession is full of sin, and the best state and kingdom that in which the number of the middle rank is the greatest,§ still diversity and inequality are essential to a happy society. “*Maximam unitatem et æqualitatem*,” saith he, “*non oportet quærere in omnibus rebus: nam si omnia essent æqualia, jam non essent omnia.*” “As all goodness cannot be comprised in one species, so there must be admitted diversity in a state. Nor ought there to be that complete uniformity and equality which Socrates and Plato prescribed.”|| Judging only from these words, methinks the philosophers of the thirteenth century were not apprentices in political science. Leaving speculations, however, for practice, one might find subject for a book that would not be void of moral and poetic interest in the domestic manners of the ancient feudal families, such as the counts of Blois, that were at once warriors, poets, pilgrims, crusaders; or those of Champagne, who were encouragers of agriculture and commerce, while they were the patrons of poets, and the protectors of all that were unhappy. The constant residence of these families in their manorial houses, is a feature of the ancient society which should not be overlooked. Perfectly in the spirit of the middle ages, are those lines of Æschylus,

*οἰκοῖ μένειν χρὴ τὸν καλῶς εὐδαίμονα  
καὶ τὸν κακῶς πράσσοντα καὶ τοῦτον μένειν.*

and the line of Euripides might have been inscribed over the portal of many an ancestral dwelling, to denote the mind of its inhabitants.

*Μακάριος ὅστις εὐτυχῶν οἶκοι μένει.*

To discover one advantage resulting from this custom, we have only to remember that hospitality in the middle ages was not a rivalry of vanity, or an account between debtor and creditor, but a religious duty. We discover the grounds of it in the canons. “The priests are to admonish the people,” say the decrees, “never to refuse lodging to a wayfarer.”¶ The difficulties of travelling in ancient times, before the road-making sons of Vulcan were abroad, *κελευτοποιοὶ παῖδες Ἡφαίστου*, as Æschylus terms them,\*\* rendered this duty more important. St. Gregory of Tours relates that a daughter of King Chilperic, going into Spain

\* De Regimine Princ. Lib. II. p. 111. c. 56.    † Id. Lib. III. p. 1. c. 7.    ‡ III. 1. 18.  
§ III. 11. 33.    || III. 1. c. 8.    ¶ Ivon. Carnot. Decret. Pars VI. 25.    \*\* Eumenid. 13.



with a company, having travelled eight leagues from Paris, passed the night under a tent ;\* and Lupentius, abbot of St. Privatus, is mentioned to have pitched tents on his journey. Hospitality was a duty imposed on the poor as well as on the great. When St. Gregory used to hear of any rustic laborer who was eminent for the practice of hospitality, he assigned to him while he lived some of the church lands, and exempted him from all tribute.† Great protection and encouragement must often have been derived by the poor from the neighborhood of a rich and well-tenanted house.

In the old charters of Berry, we read how John, founder of the chapel of Bourges, delivered the laborers from being compelled to work fifteen hours a day ; and to abolish this cruelty, he ordered that no one should go to work before six o'clock, or continue at it later than six in the summer and five in the winter. These men of power could enforce what was required by the spirit of religion and realize what was desired by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*, where " he will have no man labor over hard, to be toiled out like a horse." The loyal servant who composed the joyous and recreative history of the triumph and prowess of the good knight, without fear and without reproach, the gentle Seigneur de Bayart, sums up his character in these words : " As far as relates to the Church, no one was ever found more obedient ; in regard to nobility, no one was a better defender ; and in relation to the condition of laborers, there never was a man more full of pity and zeal to render assistance."‡ To illustrate the deeds of these houses, was often a task voluntarily undertaken by religious communities. A book concerning Rudolph, count of Rhinfield, and his illustrious family, was written by the learned and pious Martin Gerbert, abbot of St. Blaise, in the Black Forest, and printed in that monastery.

Attention to the detail of a household, and the duty of maintaining it in conformity to the spirit of the Catholic Church, had been inculcated in an early age, by bishops and other ecclesiastical doctors. St. Clemens Alexandrinus had remarked that Plato reproved the life full of Italic and Syracusan tables, in which men were filled twice a day.§ To sport with the seasons, to possess what no one else possesses, which is the noblest effort of a luxury that does not descend still lower to seek the glory of a disgusting singularity, entered not into the spirit of magnificence during the middle ages. The hospitality of the baronial hall, or of the princely houses of Italy haunted by the muses, was not designed to rival in its forms that of the court of Burgundy, when Charles the Bold had a banquet service of silver, to the value of fifty thousand marks.|| In a spirit of noble simplicity, wooden or earthen vessels were often placed before the knightly or learned strangers, with as much confidence as, if one can judge by report, a successful

\* Lib. VI. c. 37.

† Thomass. de Vet. et Nov. Eccles. discip. III. Lib. I. c. 19.

‡ La très joyeuse hyst. Prolog. XX.

§ Pædagogus Lib. II. I.

|| La Marche Estat. de la Maison du duc de Bourgogne.

speculator in trade of the present day displays before men like himself his golden buffete, enriched perhaps with the spoils of altars.

John Picus, count of Mirandula, gave most of his silver vessels and precious furniture to the poor, though his nephew Francis remarks, that he still preserved some few objects of the ancient splendor for his table, which was always, however, very moderately served.\* Angelo Politian, inviting Marsilius Ficinus to visit him at his village of Caregia, at Fiesoli, adds, among other motives, that Picus frequently comes upon him suddenly from his oaks, and leads him out of his retreat to supper, which is always frugal like his own, but sweetened with learned and agreeable conversation.†

"The very word *convivium*," says Marsilius Ficinus, writing to Bernard Bembo, the Venetian, "shows that it does not consist in eating or drinking together, but in a sweet company; as for numbers, I agree with Varro, that the guests should be never fewer than the Graces nor more than the nine Muses. No contentious person, or one who easily takes fire, should be admitted. If divine things be mentioned, men should speak with sobriety; but scientific subjects should not be introduced till the table has been removed. We should follow nature in conversation, for in the most exquisite flavors she mixes sweet with acid, lightness with solidity, and so our discourse should be composed of what is useful and of what is sweet. As for filth, it is far more detestable on the tongue than on the person. The rich and unctuous feast of Sardanapalus we abhor, for this is to die together rather than to live together. *Commori potius quam convivere*. We seek an easy freedom, not a servile difficulty. If any one should be surprised at our attaching importance to conviviality, he should remember that not only all the great sages of ancient times practised it, but that Christ, the master of life, frequently assisted and wrought miracles at banquets, which are an occasion of reminding us that the true aliment of man is God."‡ Nor were such just views confined to philosophers. The wealth of Ulberto Spinula, to whose pacific virtues the Genoese owed more than to the labors of many heroes, was immense, yet nothing was ever found in his house but what bespoke the utmost moderation, and what would now be styled rusticity.§ On every ground, how much better was it to resemble thus the old and elegant humanity of Greece, than the barbaric pride of a Hunish or Norwegian stateliness? The justice of our Catholic ancestors in all household discipline, would have found eloquent admirers in the writers of Greece and Rome. "I love the ancient state of Lacedæmon," says St. Clemens Alexandrinus, "on account of its aversion for luxury.|| I admire Plato," he says again, "for legislating against splendid furniture and for saying that one should never possess silver or gold, or any useless vessel, or such as was not required by necessary wants. The having much, ἡ πολυκτημοσύνη,

\* Vita ejus.

† Politian Epist. Lib. IX.

‡ Marsil. Ficin. Epist. Lib. III.

§ Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum elogia.

|| Pædagogus. Lib. II. c. 10.

should be taken away." Arguing against this domestic splendor of the ancient heathen civilization, he shows the absurdity of not having domestic utensils merely for use, in the same manner as the implements of husbandry and of other arts, which are never inlaid with ivory or gold. "Every thing," he says, "of this kind should be formed for use, not for pride and display; every object should be in harmony with the Christian institutes, and, as it were, a symbol of the happy life. Thus, let the device on rings be a dove, or a fish, or a ship in full sail, or a harp such as Polycrates used, or a ship's anchor. Diomede," he observes, "used to sleep upon the hide of an ox for his couch, and Ulysses repaired the tottering of his bed with a stone. Such frugality and dexterity in self assistance were not only in private men, but also in the rulers of the ancient Greeks."\* In the middle ages, there was not that multitude which is found at present of men whose whole lives are devoted to the support and transport of bodies, to provide for the luxury of the table, and of the equipage.

The rich, in the middle ages, whatever might have been their faults, were, at least, often men of active and simple habits, who would soon have decided in favor of the first of the alternatives, comprised in the words of Æschylus; *ὀρθὸν ἢ κατηρεφῇ πόδα*;† they loved not to conceal their feet in a chariot.

"Nobles," says Giles of Colonna, "are industrious, and more active than other men, in consequence of their bodies being well trained, and rendered supple by exercise in youth; and also from the conversation and society of others; for having many observers they become men meditative, subtle investigators of what ought to be done, in order to be laudable."‡

From this remark, it is clear that the thirteenth century beheld not that race of men who, like the Turks of high rank, are considered more or less of importance, in proportion as they make little use of their legs, and arms, voice, or understanding, being surrounded with menials, to whom a sign is sufficient. The ancient nobility would say with Shakespeare,

"There be some sports are painful, but their labor  
Delight in them sets off; some kinds of baseness  
Are nobly undergone."§

Again, the justice of the ages of faith, being called into action, in all the domestic relations, the condition of servants became very different from what it must generally be, where the supernatural principles do not exist. The swineherd in the Odyssey, indeed says, that he could not be more favored than in his old master's house, nor even if he were to return to the house of his father and mother, where he first lived, and who themselves nourished him.|| But when these Homeric manners were united generally with the sentiments of Christian faith, the happy

\* Id. Lib. II. c. 9.

† Eumenid. 294.

‡ De Regim. Princ. IV. 1. 5.

§ Tempest, III. 1.

|| Od. XIX. 140.



condition of domestics was not confined to a few favored instances; the Church made express provision for securing it. "Let a lord, who hath a Christian servant, love him as a son, and as a brother, on account of the communion of faith, though he be still his servant." This is what the constitutions called apostolical prescribe.\*

"It is as much advantageous to the domestic," says Giles of Colonna, to "serve his master, as it is to the master to be served by his domestic. For the master supplies example and instruction to his servant, while his servant owes corporeal service to his master; and so essential to a house is authority, that the poor are obliged to have something in place of a servant, which can serve and obey them."† Even such writers as Cardan, were sensible of this reciprocal obligation; and we find him, accordingly composing treatises on the manner in which masters of families should instruct their domestics.‡ In the work of Raban Maur, *De Institutione Clericorum*, it is said, that "Servants are to be admonished to regard the humility of their condition, and masters to be reminded that they are of the same nature with their servants. The one are to be admonished, that they may know themselves to be servants of their masters, and the other to be taught that they may know themselves to be fellow servants of their servants."§ In like manner, John of Salisbury shows the respect and affection due to servants; that is, he adds, to our fellow servants;|| and Marsilius Ficinus, writing to a prince of the Church, urges him to remember constantly that his servants are men, and in origin his equals, whom he should therefore bind to himself by affection, and not by fear.¶ "Do you know whence this poor domestic comes, who might have so much to suffer from your haughty humor? he returns to your house from the Divine banquet where great and low are received alike. He returns attended by the respect of angels; he carries within his bosom, the God who will be your judge." "Whoever observes closely," says Gerbert, "the character of Christian nations, will have no difficulty in distinguishing this secret but continued action of faith, in the Real Presence. It is to this that we owe, at least, in part, one of the most beautiful traits of our manners, the dignity of domestics, of which the nations who have rejected unity, seem to have lost even the idea."\*\*

On the other hand, the principles of faith, and the example of their masters, wrought such a revolution in the manners of servants, that no one could apply Homer's sentence to them any longer, and say, "that by the mere fact of their social condition, there was proof that they must, as men, have lost half their virtue." Orestes, in *Æschylus*, in laying his plan for taking his vengeance on *Ægistheus*, says, "that he and *Pylades*, like strangers, in a coarse and way-worn garb, will knock at the gate; and that the servants, as it is

\* Lib. IV. c. 11

† De Regim. Prin. Lib. II. P. III. c. 56.

‡ Hieron. Card. de Libris Propriis. § Rabani Mauri, de Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. 37.

|| De Nugis Curialium, Lib. VIII. cap. 13.

¶ Epist. Lib. V.

\*\* Gerbet, *Considérations sur le dogme générateur de la piété Catholique*, 173.

a villainous house, will not receive them cheerfully, but will suffer them to stand there excluded, as they first stood, without the gates.”\* In modern times, to heroic youths, however noble in mien, if their appearance, in regard to dress, be such, every house will, in this respect, be the palace of Ægistheus ; but during the feudal ages, the nobility of a family could be collected from the humility and courtesy of its domestics ; who were more inclined to transgress justice, by an unwarranted liberty in the dispensations of all their master’s bounty, than by insulting the poor, or the humble stranger, who presented himself as a guest. So eminent, indeed, was the justice of the Catholic manners, in relation to servants, that holy men affirmed, in consequence, that there was no condition happier than that of a servant, or more to be desired as favorable to salvation. It afforded a multitude of occasions for good, and very few for evil conduct. It was a state especially happy for those who desired to observe the two fundamental precepts of Christianity, humility and obedience.† A Florentine, who visited the desert of Camaldoli, might have recognized there in the person of brother Michael, a blessed hermit, the servant who had filled the goblet for him at the banquets of Lorenzo de Medici. This holy man had lived for many years with Lorenzo, at Florence, amongst his other domestics, discharging the office of butler ; when, being attracted by the conversation of the learned and religious guests, who frequented the palace, he began to feel an ardor for instruction, and procured himself books. He used to listen with infinite delight, to the long conversations held at his master’s table by the illustrious men who sat there, discoursing on the hopes of heavenly good, and on true Christian charity ; so that afterwards, when he attended Lorenzo to the chase, through the deep woods of the Trebian Villa, on the mountain of Senarius, he called to mind the warning of the Marquis Guido, when one night, deserted in a similar place by his companions, he was admonished by a horrible vision to amend his life, so that he afterwards built seven monasteries. All this so moved him, that his wishes became known, and Lorenzo enabled him to embrace the ecclesiastical state. Subsequently, having accompanied Lorenzo on his visit to the sacred desert of Camaldoli, he was so pleased with all he witnessed there, that he finally became a hermit, and there closed a life of great innocence and sanctity, in that Divine solitude.‡ Many similar instances might be found in the middle ages. Cardinal Cibo, whose servant, Lewis Stefunelli, died at Rome in the odor of sanctity, addressed a most affecting discourse to his domestics, which is still extant. He treated them as his children, and his house became a model of order and piety. Gobet, styled Saint Louis, who was a servant, composed a book of instruction for persons of his condition, which is most remarkable for the piety and excellence of its rules, as well as for the amusing simplicity of the style. “The advice doth not please me,” says Montaigne, “to speak always in the language of a master to one’s servants, without play, without

\* Æschyl. Choëphoræ. † Les Domestiques Chrétiens, Paris. ‡ Annales Camaldulens. LXXI.

familiarity. It is inhuman and unjust, to set so great a value upon such and such prerogatives of fortune; and the discipline in which there is the least apparent disparity between servants and masters, seems to me to be the most equitable." Christine de Pisan says, "that king Charles V. often discovered the destructive courses taken by some of his servants, and knew of others, who followed various ways of perdition, as frequenting taverns, and bad company, houses of gambling, and other dissolutions; but the gentle king, who, after the example of Jesus Christ, preferred recalling and correcting his people by sweetness, to adopting a method of severity, used to give them advice courteously, and admonish them; and by his kindness, used to lead them back to the right road."\*

Petrarch loved his poor fisherman at Vacluse, and speaks affectingly of his death, in a letter to the two Cardinals of Taillerand, and Bologna. "Yesterday, I lost the guardian of my retreat; he was not unknown to you; he cultivated for me a few acres of very bad land. That rustic man, whom I can never lament as he deserves, had more prudence, and even urbanity, than is often to be found in cities; and besides this, he was the most faithful creature that the earth ever produced; to him I confided my books and all that was most dear to me. I was absent three years from Vacluse; at my return, nothing was wanting, not a single thing displaced. He could not read, but he loved letters. When I gave a book to his care, he expressed great joy, and pressed it to his breast with a sigh; sometimes he named the author in a whisper. I have spent fifteen years with him, and confided to him my most secret thoughts; and his breast was to me a temple of faith and love. He died yesterday, asking continually for me, and calling upon God. His death affects me extremely."

In the cemetery of St. Nicholas, in the town of St. Maur-des-Fossès, Lebeuf describes the tomb of a servant which had been erected by his master, in testimony of the love which he bore to him.† In fact, many servants of the middle ages, in consequence of their fidelity, have become historic personages, as Guillaume Babouin, who afforded such consolation to his master, John the fifth duke of Brittany, when in the barbarous hands of the Count de Penthievre, by contriving to speak to him, and give him money, on his various removals from prison to prison.‡ The Spanish nobles used to keep in their pay, not only their own superannuated servants, and their families, but also those of their fathers, and those of the house which came to them by inheritance. The duke of Arcos, who died in 1780, entertained thus 3000 persons. Notwithstanding this magnificence, clothed with the veil of charity, which is complained of by the modern sophists, there are, as Bourgoign remarks, "fewer great houses ruined in Spain, than in any other country." The simplicity of their manners, their little taste for an habitual ostentation, the rareness of sumptuous repasts, serve as safe guards to their finances; though, when occasion requires, they are surpassed in splendor by the potentates

\* Vie du sage Roi, chap. 25. † Tom. V. 168. ‡ Lobineau, Hist. de Bret. Lib. IX.



of no country. The ambition of great families tended not to the corruption, but to the ornament of the state ; as may be witnessed in those vast towers of Bologna of which one, the family of the Asinelli, the other that of the Garisendi, built in rivalry of each other's houses, which conjoined ;\* to which a similar instance is found at Ravenna, where the towers of Pusterula and Alidosia were so called, from the noble families of those names, to whose houses they were attached.†

What Pericles said in praise of the Athenians, might, in general, be justly applied to the men of the middle ages ; "they had taste with simplicity."‡ Magnificence was reserved for extraordinary occasions ; and then used in honor of religion, as when the Roman ladies put on their diamonds only on the great festivals. Generally, the ancient idea of splendor had nothing in common with the spirit of an age, which can form no conception of any thing important without show and costliness in the materials. From the public festivities, of which we find the details in history, we can infer what was the kind of magnificence which distinguished, more or less, the houses of the great, on occasions of domestic rejoicing ; for it was the same taste which presided over both. Witness, then, the description of the entry of King Henry II. into Lyons, which is so minutely described by Paradin. "Here we behold, indeed, almost incredible splendor ; but it is not a mere barbarous display of abused riches. What chiefly excites admiration in the beholders, are things which remind no one of the orphan's tear, or the hunger of the poor ; they are spiritual emblems, the symbolic imagery, the noble inscriptions, the spectacle of natural loveliness, or of youthful dexterity and strength, the wreath of flowers, the fair troop of comely pages, representing the successive stages of youth, from childhood to maturity, the heroic and inspiring games."§

We have seen elsewhere, how conformable to these principles, which belong to justice, was the whole internal economy of life with our Catholic ancestors. The most sumptuous castle of a feudal baron, would be now deemed not a fitting residence for one of our bankers. We read, indeed, of the "false forest of a well-hung room," and we can still, in many houses, mark the lesson on the carved panels, as in the hotel of Cluny, at Paris, where the credo in action is represented by imagery, showing the grounds of faith, from the creation of the world till its consummation in the celestial Jerusalem, of which two angels record the beatitudes ; but we find not those closets of a splendor merely luxurious, which provoked the indignation of Boyle, who observes, that the "apostle who discountenanced women's wearing of gold, or precious things upon their bodies, would sure have opposed their having more sumptuous ornaments upon their walls." If our ancestors could hear their descendants complaining of their not having understood the art of comfort, that poor Scipio knew not how to live, they might, perhaps, make a

\* *Dulcini de var. Bononiæ statu. Lib. III.*

† *Desid. Spreti de origine urbis Raven. Lib. 1. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital.*

‡ *Thucyd. Lib. II. 40.*

§ *Hist. de Lyon, Liv. III. c. 27.*

prophet's reply, "*væ qui consuunt pulvillos sub omni cubito manus, et faciunt cervicalia sub capite universæ ætatis.*"\* Ferdinand IV. of Spain was educated by his holy mother, Maria, in such poverty, that in order to give to the poor, and to build churches, and to resist the infidels, they had no silver vessels on their table, but only wooden, and earthen.† When king Alphonso had recovered Toledo from the Moors, perceiving that the manners of the people had become soft and effeminate, through intercourse with the infidels, he took away the baths of Toledo, and all the provisions for pleasure, which the Moors had established there; and so endeavored to recall the people to their ancient virtue and severity.‡ Modern historians would only conclude from this fact, that the Moors possessed the advantages of a high civilization, and the Catholic king, the rudeness of a barbarous race; but so would not have thought Tacitus, who censures the baths, and sumptuous banquets which the Britons had learned to use from the Romans, adding, "*idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur cum pars servitutis esset.*"§

When Thomas Egeworth entered Rochederrieu, after the battle, he found his prisoner, Charles of Blois, placed on a bed, having received eighteen wounds. Exasperated at his refusal, in such a state, to deliver himself to him, he commanded that the bed should be removed, and straw substituted. Charles felt the advantage, at that moment, of having been educated as a Catholic prince. Giving thanks to God, he declared that it was the same to him, and he vowed that in future he would never again lie couched upon luxurious plumes.||

Who is not more astonished, on reading of the magnificent and pious works of Cosmo de Medicis? "How many churches and monasteries hath he built and repaired?" says Benedict Aretino. "With what beautiful edifices hath he adorned our city? No man ever before supported so many poor people as he hath, with his own riches. And it can scarcely be told with what parsimony and religion he governs his own house. It is worth while to see him and his virtuous sons, walk through the streets without pomp, without servants, and simply clad; so that strangers would suppose they were common men."¶

"The ancients," says Huber, "are praised for having confined their magnificence to the temples of religion, while their own dwellings were but miserable huts. This is still more or less the case in Spain. The dwelling-house, the whole system of private life, bespeak poverty. The churches, convents, hospitals, and palaces of justice are superb; an unquestionable proof of barbarism," he adds, ironically, "according to our views of civilization."\*\*\*

With some men, it is sufficient to read that article of provision in the charter of privilege, granted to the Seigneur of Sassey, which declares that his right of lodging comprises stables for his horses, and perches for his birds,†† or to see on

\* Ezech. XIII.

† Roderici Santii Hist. Hispanic. Pars IV. c. 8.

‡ Lucii Marinei Siculi de Reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. VII.

§ De vita. Agricolæ.

|| Lobineau Hist. de Bret. VII.

¶ De præstantia Virorum sui ævi Dialog.

\*\*\* Skizzen aus Spanien. XXIII.

†† Hist. d'Evreux.

the walls of the Castle of Blois, the figure of a hind, carved there by order of Louis XII. to commemorate an animal, which had been taken in the forest, whose history in verse is inscribed below the figure, to feel impelled to declaim against the interminable and destructive amusements of the feudal nobility, as legitimate ground for denying the existence of domestic justice, during the middle ages: but on such occasions, it should be remembered, that if the practice were often defective, it was not so with regard to principles, which agreed with those of Aristotle and Anacharsis, who say, "that to take pains, and to labor for the sake of play, was silly and too boyish; but that to play in order to take pains and labor was just and right."\* Not to remain on ground which we have before gone over, it may be only observed here, that the writers of the middle age were even more severe against hunters than seem tolerable, if we did not bear in mind, what was the sense of justice continually in their minds. According to their reading, men are hunters, not before, but against the Lord, according to the sense attached to the word *ἐναντίον*, by St. Augustin.†

"Men see a hunter, and are delighted, says Ives de Chartres. "Woe to them wretched," he adds, "if they be not corrected." "Qui enim vident venatorem et delectantur, videbunt Salvatorem et contristabuntur,"‡ words which might excite surprise, if we did not remember the hunting of such men, as the tyrant Eccelino, that enemy of the human race,§ and James of Sant Andrea, whom Dante found in hell, among the prodigal, who set fire to a cottage in order to warm himself and his friends, after hunting on a cold winter's day, and then gave three acres of land and money sufficient to build three houses to the peasant whom he had injured.|| Grievous and loud were the complaints of the clergy, on the subject of those "qui propter venationes et amorem canum causum pauperum negligunt."¶ Frequently, however, they found an echo in the knightly breast.

There are the charters of the counts and countesses of Blois, declaring, as in that dated in the year 1298, that for the remedy of their souls and of those of their fathers, and desiring to provide for the good of the country, they will keep no game, excepting within certain determined woods, and that whatever animal is found without those parts, whether stag or boar, or hare, or whatever sort of beast or wild bird, may be hunted and killed by any one, whether he be noble or not noble, without being called to give any account. The inhabitants of the country may take these beasts or birds, either with dogs or traps, or in whatever manner they like, and at whatever hour of the day or night they may choose.\*\* A count of Spanheim, in 1454, might have been seen feeding daily thirty poor

\* Ethic Nicom. Lib. 10. c. 6.

† De Civitate Dei, Lib. XVI. 4.

‡ Ivonis. Carnot. Decret. Pars. XIII. 32.

§ Chronic. Rolandini. IX. 14.

|| Bernardini Scardeonii hist. Patavinæ, Lib. III. 13.

¶ Ionæ Aurelianensis, Episcop. de Institut. Lacali, Lib. II. 23. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom I.

\*\* Bernier Hist. de Blois, Preuves XXVIII.



men at his table, for the soul of his father, Count Walram, who lay buried in the church of Spanheim, whose punishment after death, for having injured the property of the peasants in the hunting, which was his sole pleasure, had been revealed to Godrid the chaplain, as he walked by night across the plain between Winterberg and Pferdfeld, by sounds and visions from the forests, so dreadful that he never smiled again.\*

In a former book, some excuse was offered for the passion which men of the middle ages evinced for the chase. Many of the old popular sayings, show that the condition of the country rendered it in some sense a service of public utility. Pasquier cites many such, as "when one speaks of the wolf, one sees the trace;" "go not to the woods when the wolves eat one another;" "necessity drives the wolf from the woods;" "while the dog cries the wolf flies;" "he who makes himself a lamb, the wolf will devour him;" "the hour between dog and wolf," to denote twilight, when a wolf might be mistaken for a dog.†

St. Hubert gave a kind of sanctity to the chase of forests, and it cannot be denied but that the exercises of the declining year, leading men to consort with the solemn beauties of mourning nature, must have had a beneficial influence on the mind. Many fine moral instructions would have been lost, methinks, to men who had not known what it was to hold lonely converse with the withered fern and ragged furze stretched o'er the stony heath, to mark all the changes on the mountain's side which give note of the declining year, to see the falling leaves blown wildly across their path, to tread the thick strewn glades, and to traverse the watery rushy wastes, hearing amidst the lurid gleam of nocturnal exhalations, the lengthened notes of the northern birds who sing there, as Olaus Magnus supposes, through cold and hunger.‡ It is an historical fact, that many hunters of the middle ages ascribed their conversion to an early familiarity with the woods, to their habit of wandering amidst twilight groves and solemn wastes, when the leaf incessant rustled, slowly circling through the air, or descending in wild showers from the boughs before the rising storm; but whatever may be thought of the passion which our feudal ancestors evinced for the chase, I know not on what ground their descendants can presume to criticise and condemn them.

Round their Cyclopan hearts,§ within the sea-washed tower, or the dusky hall, deep in forest wilds, the long narrations of the hunter to companions, who

‘Hear, half asleep, the rising storm  
Hurling the hail and sleeted rain  
Against the casement's tinkling pane,”

may perhaps indicate, in the estimation of some persons, a state of society truly barbarous. Certainly, our ancestors, like Vigil's husbandmen, enjoyed the winter's tale.

\* *Chronic. Hirsaugiens.*

† *Pasquier Recherches de la Franc. Lib. VIII. 15.*

‡ *Olia Magni Hist. Septent. gent. Lib. XIX. 7.*

§ *Iph. in Taur. 836.*

‘Mutuaque inter se læti convivia çurant,  
Invitat genials hiems, curasque resolvit.’\*

It is amusing to read of the strange knight in the forest, who wishes to force his story upon Gyron le Courtois, who only consents to listen to it, to prevent the other from engaging in a mortal combat with him on the spot. The *ὑμνων θεσaurus*, of which Pindar speaks, might have been found in every feudal tower, where undoubtedly discourse in general was more wild, youthful and credulous, than would suit the formal sagacity which resides within our luxurious cottages; but, let it be remembered, that the odious vices of the conversations which the principles of faith do not guide, were not found so frequently there. Our ancestors had been made familiar with the saying of St. Jerome, who, condemning detraction, says, that “we should love the houses of all Christians as our own.”† Religion’s voice had determined not only the doctrines of intelligence, but also the details of practice. It is recorded in the epitaph on the tomb of Claude Albert d’Arbois, seigneur de Romeny, which is in the church of Lusarches, in the diocese of Paris, a hero renowned for his probity and valor, that his hatred for calumnious remarks was carried so far, that he was styled at court, “The protector of the absent.”‡ Their very recreations were known to be a part of justice. “Not every pleasant is an idle word,” says Giles of Colonna; “for an idle word is that which wants a due end, but recreation is liberal and necessary; therefore, words tending to it, have a due end and are not idle, for as sleep is necessary for the wearied body, so is play for the fatigued mind.”§ A stranger and guest did not enter a feudal hall with the certainty of being received with distasteful looks and cold-moving nods that would freeze him into silence.

It is related of Schiller that, in society, the strict ceremonial cramped the play of his mind. “Hemmed in,” says the writer of his life, “as by invisible fences, among the intricate barriers of etiquette, so feeble, so inviolable, he felt constrained and helpless, alternately chagrined and indignant. Now this evil, which every one above the vulgar must experience more or less, was wholly excluded from the society of the middle ages; for manners were then playful, unreserved and free. Men did not, indeed, set open their gates to the invaders of most of their time; they were hospitable, but they did not, as Cowley says, “expose their lives to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which make a wise man tremble to think of.” We have only to examine the division and structure of their habitations, to see how they had means at least afforded to them, between their massive walls, for that solitary and silent meditation, on the divine law, which, in the divine scriptures, is synonymous with justice.

It may be remarked in history, that when the head of the house was unworthy, there is generally incidental, and often direct evidence of the redeeming qualities

\* Georg. I. 301. † Epist. XXXIV. ‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris, tom. IV. 326  
§ De Regim. Princip. II. 1. 30.

of its other members. There is no name associated with shame or terror, which the virtues of women have not in some way or other rescued from unmingled aversion. Among the poor Clares in the convent of Majorca, in the year 1260, you would have found a sister, Magdelin Bonaparte, renouncing even the legitimate pleasures of the world to serve God with perfect, undivided love.\*

If the old chronicles of Switzerland describe the crimes of the seigneurs of Sargans and of Watz, chiefs of a powerful family in the Rhetian Alps, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, who used to make war against the abbots of St. Gall, they do not leave us in ignorance of the virtues of the women of that noble house, which were enough to have rendered its name immortal.

Listen, now, to a simple tale of the 13th century, which is recorded in the annals of the Franciscan order. Two friars of Paris, travelling in the depth of winter, came at the first hour of the night, fatigued, covered with mud, and wet with rain, to the gate of a house where they hoped to receive hospitality, not knowing that it belonged to a knight who hated all friars, and who for twenty years had never made his confession. The mother of the family replied to their petition, "I know not, good fathers, what to do. If I admit you under our roof, I fear my husband; and if I send you away cruelly in this tempestuous night, I shall dread the indignation of God. Enter, and hide yourselves till my husband returns from hunting, and has supped, for then I shall be able to supply you secretly with what is needful." Shortly, the husband returns, sups joyfully, but perceiving that his wife is sad, desires to know the cause. She replies that she dares not disclose it. Pressed and encouraged, she at length relates what has happened, adding, that she fears God's judgment, seeing that his servants are afflicted with cold and hunger, while they are feasting at their ease. The knight becoming more gentle, orders them to be led forth from their hiding-place, and to be supplied with food. The poor friars come forth, and draw near the fire, and when he sees their emaciated faces, humid raiment, and their feet stained with blood, the hand of the Lord is upon him, and from a lion he becomes a lamb; with his own hands he washes their feet, places the table, and prepares their beds, bringing in fresh straw. After the supper, with altered look and tone, he addresses the elder friar, and asks whether a shameless sinner, who hath not confessed since many years, can hope for pardon from God? "Yea, in sooth," replied the friar, "hope in the Lord, and do good, and he will deal with thee according to his mercy; for, in whatever day the sinner repents, he will remember his iniquity no more." The contrite host declares that he will not then defer any longer approaching the Sacraments. "This very night," saith he, "I will unburden my conscience, lest my soul should be required of me." The friar, however, little suspecting danger of death, advised him to wait till morning. All retired to rest, but, during the night the friar became alarmed, rose, prostrated himself

\* Wadding Annal. Minorum.



on the earth, and besought God to spare the sinner. In the morning, however, the master of the house was found dead. The man of God, judging from what had passed, consoled the widow, declared that in his dreams he had been assured of the salvation of her husband; and the man was buried honorably, bells were tolled, and mass was sung, and the friars departed on their way.\*

It is to instances of this kind that St. Jerome alludes in his beautiful epistle to Læta, where he says, "A holy and faithful family must needs sanctify its infidel chief. That man cannot be far from entering upon the career of faith, who is surrounded by sons and grandsons enlightened by the faith. For my part, I think that Jupiter himself, if he had lived in the midst of such relations, could not have been prevented from believing in Jesus Christ. Let your illustrious father, if he pleaseth, turn my letter to ridicule; let him tax me with folly. He will do nothing but what his son-in-law did also, some time before his conversion. Christians are not formed by birth, but by grace."†

We meet with frequent instances in the history of the middle ages of whole families being composed of saints, for even among persons who had not formally retired into cloisters, the perfect life was often found. "O happy house," cries St. Jerome, writing to Chromatius and Eusebius, brothers, who lived with their friend Jovinus, and their mother and sisters, who were nuns, all under one roof: "O happy house, in which dwell Anna the widow, virgins, prophetesses, and two Samuels nourished in the temple."‡

"At Dijon," says St. Gregory of Tours, "there was a certain senator by name Hilary, who had a wife and many sons, who maintained his house in such chastity and purity, that men beheld there the fulfilment of what the apostle says, 'Honorable connubium et thorus immaculatus.' Master and servants, all shone with equal purity. So he died. Who and what he was, according to the dignity of the world, may be seen at this day on his immense tomb, which is of marble sculptured."§

Under the roof of Alphonso de Cepede and Beatrice d'Ahumade, the parents of St. Theresa, each member of that numerous household of children and servants endeavored to give the rest an example of perfect piety. That certain image of sincerity and love of truth which, in the estimation of Muratori, so amply compensated for the inelegant style of Donizo, whom he grants may be called a barbarous and iron writer, appears in no part of his metrical Life of Mathilda more strikingly than in the verses which describe the dukes of Tuscany and Spoleto as brave Catholic men begetting Catholic sons.

Justitiæ palmam gestabant semper et arma  
 Temporibus quorum viguit pax ordoque morum,  
 Catholici fortes genuerunt Catholicosque.

\* Wadding Ann. Minorum, tom. V. an. 1281.

† Epist. VII.

‡ S. Hieron. Epist. ad Lætiam.

§ De gloria Confessorum, 43.

Clavigeri Petri normam sancti quoque cleri  
Semper amaverunt, coluerunt, et timuerunt,  
Ex propriis rebus sanctis hi multa dederunt  
Escas, et vestes miseris tribuere libenter.\*

What families were those which produced St. Bernard and St. Benedict ! What sweet and wide-spreading influences of saintly affections must have existed between their different members ! What dialogues between a brother and a sister—a Benedict and a Scolastica ! Mystic conversations approved of heaven, canonized in the tempest of that awful night which heard the last of them, and which from the memory of man shall never perish ! What holy families are brought to light by the annals of the Franciscans alone, which incidentally speak of the relations of different members of that order ! St. Clare had a mother, Hortulana, and two sisters, the blessed Agnes and Beatrice, who all followed her example. The blessed king Boleslaus, the chaste, had a mother, the blessed Grimislava, and a sister, the blessed Salomea, and for his wife the blessed Cunegond, who had two sisters, the blessed Constance, Duchess of Russia and the blessed Jolenta, who, after the death of her husband Boleslaus, the pious Duke of Calissa, gave all she had to the poor, and retired into the convent of Clares, which he had founded. What roots of living virtue are here spreading far and wide ! Ezelinus, Count Palatine of the Rhine, brother of St. Cunegond, and of Theodoric, Bishop of Metz, whom the Emperor Henry, unable to conquer by force of arms, subdued by kindness, had ten children, of whom all but one son and one daughter, who remained with great honor in the world, became eminent in religion, two as archbishops, and six as abbesses.†

There are few historical works of the middle ages which do not furnish similar instances. Hangericus was an illustrious man, major domo to Theodoric, King of the Burgundians. He had four children by his wife, Leodegunda : St. Pharo, at first a soldier, then a clerk, then a monk in Resbach, and lastly bishop of Meaux ; St. Canoaldus, his brother, from a child was a monk in Luxeuil, under father Columban, and afterwards became a bishop. St. Phara, their sister, consecrated her virginity to God ; and their brother, Count St. Walbert, who inherited the paternal possessions, and who used often to repair to the blessed Bertin, at St. Omer, to hear the word of God, and to receive his blessing, at length renounced the world, and became a monk at Luxeuil, and upon the death of his brother, the blessed Pharo, succeeded him in the see of Meaux ; his son again, St. Bertin, lived a holy life at St. Omer, under the holy Bertin, who had baptized him, and made a blessed end.‡

The family of queen St. Etheldrite, abbess of Ely, furnishes an instance from our annals, for her father, king Anna, was of eminent justice, making himself equal to

\* Lib. I. cap. I. Rer. Italic. Script. tom. V.

† Annal. Hirsaugiensis.

‡ Chronicon, Monasterii S. Bertini. cap. 1. Pars X. apud Marten. Thesaur. anecdotorum, tom. III.

his servants through humility, lowly to priests, grateful to the people, devout to God, the father of orphans, the judge of widows, and the brave defender of his country, whose sepulchre was revered as that of a saint ; and her mother, Hereswetha, who was the sister of St. Hilda, shone in the glory of sanctity ; of her two brothers, Jurminus was a blessed man, and her three sisters, for the love of Jesus Christ, deserved to have oil in their lamps among the prudent, one of whom, Sexburga, succeeded her as Abbess of Ely.\* In the twelfth century, we find a Wido, Count of Matiscon, with his wife, sons, and daughters, and also thirty soldiers, probably of his household, coming to Cluni, where they all embrace a religious life.† In the eleventh century, Seliger Von Wollhausen was a valiant knight and renowned warrior. In his beloved and pious wife, Hedwig, and in his three sons, with his ample fortune and high renown, he possessed all means of earthly happiness. But the holy Church, he thought, required his services ; he renounced the world, its joys, and its honors, and retired to the monks of Einsiedeln, his three sons following him, and his wife taking the veil in the convent of our Lady, at Zurich.‡ Here could have been no sudden change, and therefore one can estimate what must have been the interior life of these families during previous times. Bruno, the Benedictine, one of the apostles of Prussia, in the tenth century, was the son of the illustrious Baron of Querfurt, who was renowned among his contemporaries, and beloved by all men. The sequel throws light upon the character of that house, for when the news arrived at the baron's castle of the son's martyrdom in Prussia, whither he had gone to preach the Gospel to the heathen, the excellent father was in such a state of mind that he could instantly carry into effect a resolution which he had long been forming, and retire into a monastery for the remainder of his days. In the year 1187 died that most illustrious and religious man, Peter Acotantus, patrician and senator of Venice, whose sanctity under the secular habit, attested by miracles, rendered glorious the church of St. Basil in that city, where his limbs were laid to rest. It was his brother of the same name who, despising the dignity and the pleasures of the world, withdrew to the desert of Camaldoli.§ Thus you have one brother reaping eternal glory as a senator and another as a hermit. The great patrician family of the Ajutamichristo was illustrious at Pisa, in the thirteenth century. This could boast, at the same time, of a blessed Bartholomew, in the monastery of St. Frigidianus, of Fred-eric and Guido, either brothers or nephews of this saint, who evinced their piety, by building the choir of the Dominican church of St. Catherine, at Pisa, and of blessed Thomas, son of Bernard, who despising the honor and riches of his family, embraced the order of St. Dominic and died in the house of St. John and St. Paul, at Venice.||

In the year 1239, Albertinus resolves to pass the remainder of his life in the

\* *Acta Sanct. Ord. S. Bened.* tom. II.

† *Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik*, 40.

‡ *Id. Lib. XXXVIII.*

† *Chronicum Cluniacens.*

§ *Annal. Camaldulens, Lib. XXXIV*



monastery of St. Just, and St. Clement, in Volaterra, where his son, the blessed James de Certaldo, was professed. In 1281, Ingeramius de Certaldo follows his father and brother, and becomes a monk in the same house.\* Hermolao Donato, a Venetian senator, and Marina Lauretana, his wife, were blessed in the number of their saintly children. This was the illustrious man of whom Ambrosius Camaldulensis speaks, who was ambassador from Venice at the council of Basle, and whose foul murder is attested on the sepulchre in the cloister of the monastery of St. Michael de Muriano, as having been perpetrated in the year 1450, by an impious hand, and suffered in the cause of justice, while he magnanimously forgave. Of their ten children, four only remained in the world, the rest left all for God. Four saintly sisters took the veil in the Benedictine convent of St. Servulus. Peter, whose portrait at full length by Tintoretti, is in the monastery of St. Michael de Muriano, of which he built the church, became the abbot of that house, distinguished by his admirable genius, learning, and sanctity. Lewis, who is praised by Leonard Justiniani, as a sublime philosopher, and most learned, was also a monk; and Thomas, another devout religious man, became patriarch of Venice in the year 1505.† In fact, examples of this kind are innumerable. Let us pass on.

The ages of faith in relation to the graces of the female character, might well fix the attention of all who have minds capable of being arrested by the delicate and sublime themes which belong to gentle studies. At the first, chastity, modesty, obedience, attention to domestic studies, and other virtues, made Christian women dear to their pagan husbands, and even gave these men a reverence for the divine philosophy in which they had been educated, so that they used to exclaim with Libanius, "Proh, quales, feminas habent Christiani!" Moral writers appeal to this fact in developing the proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, and historians supply the same evidence in uninterrupted succession, through all subsequent times. Whether there be slight shades of difference observable in different periods, we need not examine. One thing is certain, that upon the women of the middle ages the imagination might for ever dwell with peaceful and salutary delight. The striking opposition of figures in regard to the female character, which the life of faith has created, is well represented by the author of the Martyrs. "An astonishing contrast," saith he, "was observable on all sides. The daughters of Lacedemon, still attached to their gods, appeared on the roads with their tunics half open, their free and bold manner, their confident looks, with such they used to dance at the festivals of Bacchus, or of Hyacinth. Further on you discovered the Christian virgins chastely dressed, worthy daughters of Helen by their beauty, and more beautiful than their mother by their modesty. They were going with the rest of the faithful to celebrate the mysteries of a worship which renders the heart gentle for the child, charitable for the slave, humble for

\* Id. XXXIX.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LXVII.

the poor, pure and holy for the young. It seemed as if one beheld two different nations, so great a change can religion produce in human breasts."\* Who has not experienced impressions somewhat similar in lands where the children of the pacific fold were but few amidst a multitude? Are we to ascribe the contrast, as we are told, to the defect of education in some, and to the high instruction or nobility of others? That this cannot be the true solution, is evident; for under circumstances of the same variety in other countries, the same effects are not discernible. The cause must lie deeper, and without doubt the phenomenon arises from the fact, that the latter are left to the fluctuating tastes of a civilization purely human and natural, while the former, for whom 'twixt beautiful and good I cannot say which name was fitter, are daughters of the Catholic Church—the women of the middle ages—the women of the primitive ages—the daughters of Jerusalem who ministered to our divine Lord, and who followed his apostles with such fervor and constancy—the women of faith, transformed, and, as it were, new created. How strange to find men of the greatest genius, and of the most extensive learning in modern times, ignorant apparently of the existence of this mystic being. "Men," saith Goëthe, "must strive after some distant good, and that with violent efforts. Men must labor for eternity; whereas women are content with possessing on this earth a simple, near, and limited good, which they wish might always remain stationary with them."† Had this illustrious philosopher, then, never heard the hymn of *Jesu corona virginum*, attesting so sweet a page in the history of the human mind; or, without waiting for the voice of the Church and the testimony of historians, had he never met with any of the daughters of Jerusalem whom God anoints with the oil of gladness, on account of truth, and meekness, and justice? One glance at the portrait of a St. Theresa, or of a St. Elizabeth, would be sufficient to dispel for ever such conceptions of the female heart. In the first of these illustrious women, how completely did the cloister swallow up all fond memory of former things—beauty, dress, feasts, evening conversations under orange trees, and Moorish songs, and the sound of the mandoline, and all that had adorned love in the eyes of a beautiful Spanish girl, nourished with the reading of the *romanceros*! Love alone remained, more ardent since it had become purer, more profound since it had become more divine. For a while, it is true, this great soul struggled against the remembrance of the world. Ten years did not suffice to detach from the earth the heart that was not made for it: but how effectual was the ardor of its thirst when the true and living streams of that justice which it had so long sought for in vain, were at length yielded to it from the fountains of heaven!

In the preceding book, we had occasion to remark the intense affection evinced by women for the devotions and offices of the Catholic Church, and the desire after something more than "a near and limited good," which prompted them to seek

\* *Les Martyrs*, XIV.

† Goëthe *Torquato Tasso*.

unceasing sustenance in the exercise of divine worship. It might have been shown, for the same object, that women used to make long pilgrimages. The holy Dorothea went from Montau, in Pomerania, to Rome, for the jubilee, in the year 1390, as did also queen Margaret, out of Denmark.\* Queen Isabella of Spain used to recite her office, like a nun. She seemed to lead a contemplative life amidst all her cares, and the splendor of her chapel was celebrated throughout the kingdom.† Donizo says, that “the countess Mathilda, surpassed even priests in the love of Christ—

‘Ista sacerdotes de Christi vincit amore,  
Tempore nocturno studiosius atque diurno  
Est sacris Psalmis, ac officiis venerandis  
Religione pia, satis hæc intenta perita.  
Hærent semper ei sapientes maxime cleri  
Vestibus et vasis pretiosis rite sacratis.’ ”

The account of her last days still proclaims her unsated thirst. In the Bonden village she resolved to assist at the office on Christmas night, which was sung by father Ponzo, Abbot of Cluni. The immense cold at first so afflicted her aged limbs, that she returned sick to her bed. At day-break, though languid, she again heard mass, after which she gave the abbot, on his departure, sacred vestments, and silver vessels, and a holy cross adorned with gems. Similarly she celebrated the feast of the Epiphany; but when the season came in which Jesus fasted, she, though weak, desired to fast also for his love. The priest, however, prohibited her, and prescribed that she should only give abundant alms. Being confined to her bed during seven months, a small church under the invocation of St. James and Zebedee, was constructed by her orders before the house in which she lay, to which she gave lands and vestments, and there, while lying on her bed, she continued to hear mass, that whom she served living, she might also in dying worship. Her body was buried within a vast tomb of white and limpid alabaster, in the monastery of St. Benedict, of Padoleron on the Po, a house ten miles from Mantua, which had been founded by her grandfather, Tedaldo, and enriched by her own donations, where was found this history metrically composed.

To the eternal sigh of women the Church has been deeply indebted in all ages: and every where we find monuments of their pious liberality, of which the most illustrious example is doubtless that of this great countess Mathilda, who made the Church of God her heir, offering on the altar of St. Peter, her whole patrimony, extending from Radicofani to Cesena, which from that time has been ever called the patrimony of St. Peter. Celebrated was the munificence of the Countess of Eu, sister of Udalric, Archbishop of Rheims, and of Alberon, Bishop of Metz, who, in the year 959, founded and endowed many monasteries, and restored others that had been ruined by the Normans.‡ Guilla, mother of the marquis

\* Voight, *Geschichte Preussens*, V. † Lucii Marinei Siculi de reb. Hispaniæ, Bib. XXI.

‡ Desguerroy. *Hist. du diocese de Troyes*, 185



Hugo, in the eleventh century, passing by Arretium, and happening to hear that the church there was commonly entitled St. Mary the poor, exclaimed, in great indignation, "Forbid it, heaven, that we should ever style her poor who produced the Dispenser of celestial riches ! Have I," she then asked, "any possessions in this neighborhood ?" and being told that there was a villa near belonging to her, "Let it, then, be given immediately to this church," she replied, "that in future no one may even presume to call it poor."\* We find traces of the same devotedness of women to the Church in the most obscure annals. Thus about the year 700 we read of the noble lady, Hermentrude, leaving by will to the church of Bondies, in the diocese of Paris, her oxen, ploughs, and carts, and other implements of labor, and also a quantity of land, as well as certain vestments, to the church of St. Denis, and others to the brethren of Bondies.† That great woman, Adelle, wife of Stephen, Count of Blois, who governed his territories after his death in Palestine, and with whom Ives de Chartres used to correspond, besides her liberality to many churches and convents, conferred such benefits upon Marmoutiers, as to be styled in its title deeds, "*majoris monasterii amatrix ferventissima.*"

A German traveller describes a charming scene in illustration of the affection of women for the ecclesiastical offices, when relating the return of a young Spaniard, Antonio, to his father's house, near Cordova, after an absence of ten years, where no one recognized him but his sister, the most beautiful maiden of Andalusia, and of the world, as her brother Esteban says, and an angel besides. After the most affectionate embraces, and the tenderest entreaties, while a thousand questions were about to be asked respecting kindred and friends, Dolores, for such was the maiden's name, having prepared refreshment to set before her brother, suddenly asks his permission to leave the house. "What, dear little sister, already ?" asks Antonio, "before I have spoken ten words will you go forth ?" Yes, for it was the moment to repair to the cathedral for mass, and the angelic daughter of Spain, the mild and gracious being, at the same time mystical and gay, will not suffer even a brother's love, and the joy of receiving him after so long an absence, to interfere with the duties which she owes to heaven. The long-lost brother accompanies her. They pass through the Moorish arch of the cathedral tower into the court of oranges ; one of those spots the memory of which ever remains with the wanderer, to shed a glowing and delicious light of phantasy over the darkest ways of life ; the whole air of the place is embalmed with fragrance, and in the centre is a clear fountain ; some cypress trees, and two lofty palms are growing near it. Three sides of the court are composed of walks, adorned with Moorish arches, and a tower ; the fourth is formed by that wood of a thousand pillars, each of a different marble, adorned with a wondrous workmanship, constituting the cathedral, the nave and choir of which is in the Gothic

\* Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XVIII.

† Lebeuf, Hist. du diocese de Paris, VI. 61

style, being surrounded with a multitude of chapels, enriched with ancient arabesque mosaics, and the choicest paintings of a Cespedes, a Cano, a Murillo, and other masters. Here knelt down Dolores before the altar, and it was not until her brother had waited long in the court conversing with other young men who met there, that she was prepared to rise and follow him.\*

"In Portugal, in the upper ranks of life, female piety and practical religion, are singularly conspicuous." It is an English traveller who makes this remark. "Among ladies of rank," he continues, "the characters of Martha and Mary are beautifully blended; for even during the intervals of conversation, whilst their hands are busily employed in knitting and sewing for the poor, their minds and hearts are evidently engaged in meditation and prayer. In this there is no appearance of affectation, nothing obtrusive, or otherwise unpleasant to those who are less piously inclined. They assist at mass every morning, communicate twice a week; they are religious without bigotry, pious without ostentation. A Portuguese family realizes all my ideas, and embodies all my notions of domestic happiness. It is the music of the spheres; it is the harmony and loveliness of nature.†

It was a question with philosophers during the scholastic ages, on which side, betwixt the two of human kind, lay the greatest sin, in the event which first brought guilt into the world. Peter Lombard, the master of the sentences, says, "that the woman sinned against herself, and her neighbor, and God; but that the man sinned only against himself and God; for he seems to have complied, wishing rather to risk all, than leave his companion to perish alone. The woman, therefore," he says, "sinned most, and consequently her punishment was the greater. In dolore paries filios."‡ On the other hand, Isidore and Hugo of St. Victor conclude, that Adam sinned more than Eve, because he sinned after more deliberation, and having had more entrusted to him.§ Though St. Augustin says, that Adam's judgment was not deceived in following Eve's advice, but that he obeyed a social necessity.|| After all, St. John of the cross comes to the conclusion that the woman sinned in some respect through ignorance, because she was seduced and deceived, while Adam's fall was worse "for Adam was not seduced," says the apostle;¶ "Adam knew and willed his misfortunes."\*\*

But whatever difference of opinion may have existed upon this point, and whatever be the cause of the phenomena, whether natural, arising from the fact noticed by Medea, that "a woman is born to tears,"†† or whether it proceed from a more especial grace, in recompense of their early affection for Jesus Christ, all men seem to have been equally convinced of the supereminent piety, and singular religious merit of the female sex, under the influence of faith in the mystery which redeemed the world, and in submissive obedience to the Catholic Church, the

\* Huber Skizzen aus Spanien.

† Letters to Orosius on Portugal.

‡ Lib. II. distinct. 22.

§ Hugo de St. Victor. Tract III. c. 6.

|| De Civ. Dei. XIV. 11.

¶ Tim. II. 14.

\*\* The obscure night of the soul, XXII.

†† Eurip. Med. 926.

mother and mistress of the meek, and the fountain of justice to the human race.

The assiduity of women, in repairing to the Churches, is not a phenomenon which dates from the period of the decline of faith, as some modern travellers through France are inclined to suppose. In the Acts of the Apostles, where there is mention of the oratory on the banks of the river near Philippi, we read : "*Et sedentes loquebamur mulieribus, quæ convenerant.*"\*

In primitive times, so many women and slaves embraced Christianity, that it was made an occasion to revile the Christian religion, as if such men alone had courage to preach their doctrine, and as if women alone would listen to it. Thus we see on an ancient gem, an ass clothed in a toga, preaching before two women, who seem to listen attentively ; and this is supposed to be a satire on those slaves who endeavored to convert the women of their master's family. St. Jerome, writing to Vigilantius, and mentioning the profound awe and scrupulous reverence with which he always entered the Churches, adds, "You may, perhaps, laugh to ridicule the weakness of women. I do not blush to possess the faith of those who first beheld our Lord after his resurrection, who were sent to the apostles, and who are commended to the holy apostles, in the mother of our Lord and Saviour. You feast with the men of this world ; I will fast with women."†

The inscription near the shrine of St. Charles of Borromeo, in the cathedral of Milan, particularly states, that the holy archbishop had, in an especial manner, commended himself to the prayers of the devout female sex ; which is the epithet that the church always applies to these,—the tenderest, and often most heroic of her children. The virtues that characterized women peculiarly during the middle ages, would be an inexhaustible theme for the historian, or the poet. I can only pass hastily before them, keeping in view their relation to the interior life of families, as constituting part of that justice, for which the human race thirsted, which was given to be the consolation of its pilgrimage, and the recompense of its faith.

Nevertheless, there was an institution existing without this sphere, which though external, produced too great an influence upon the domestic manners of our ancestors, not to be considered as a subject for our present investigation. I allude to the conventual life of nuns, whose example and instructions, both from their having presided over the early education of daughters, and from the necessary connection which bound so many to the brethren, and other relatives, who continued in the world, must have at all times, exercised no inconsiderable influence upon the character of society in general. Originally, indeed, this influence came from within. Abeillard, in two letters to Heloisa, respecting the duties of their monastic state, shows, that nuns are only descendants of the holy women in the primitive church who accompanied our Lord and his Apostles ; and that the monastic institute is only a mode of perpetuating those congregations of virgins and widows who

\* Cap. XVI.

† S. Hieronym. Epist. XXXVII.



then held so distinguished a rank. Thus St. Julia, in the third century, is named in the old history, *Sanctimonialis*, and described as leading a holy, religious life at Troyes, in the house of her father, where she remained secluded.\*

The deaconesses, for whose ordination there was an express office, were perpetuated in the church until the ninth century, if not even to later times.† Their origin, as that of the recluses, may be easily traced to those pious women among the Jews, amongst whom was Anna, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, who for many years departed not from the temple, serving God day and night, in fasting and prayer, and who deserved to behold the infant Messiah.‡ The influence of the religious communities of women upon the manners and general tone of society, was communicated through many channels, of which the education of daughters was, no doubt, one of the most efficacious. Dante beholds Constance in Paradise, who had been taken from

“The pleasant cloister’s pale,”

to become the wife of the Emperor Henry the Sixth.

“From whom with violence were torn  
The saintly folds that shaded her fair brows.  
E’en when she to the world again was brought,  
In spite of her own will and better wont,  
Yet not for that the bosom’s inward veil  
Did she renounce.”§

To an early acquaintance with the convent, much, indeed, that distinguished the character of women in the middle ages must be ascribed, for even when education had not been received there, occasional visits had been made to the devout sisters. The maiden of the castle knew what was the sanctity and peace of the secluded cloistral life, and hence that ideal form of virtue was embalmed in her imagination, and impressed upon her heart with an eternal memory.

St. Odilo, the fifth abbot of Cluni, says, that it would require the pen of a St. Jerome to describe the empress Adelaïda, who deserved the same praise as is bestowed on Paula and Marcella, Fabiola, Læta, and Demetriades.|| In fact, many illustrious queens lived a cloistral life upon the throne. Such were the wife of Charlemagne; Cunegonde, wife of Henry the First, king of England; Agnes, wife of the Emperor Henry the Third, whose mother was living in the convent of Fructuara; Elizabeth, wife of the Emperor Albert, first archduke of Austria; Radegonde, wife of Clotaire; Adoëre, wife of Chilperic; Batilde, wife of Clovis; and Agnes of Bohemia, wife of Frederic the Second. There was, moreover, an incidental mode of influence which nuns who inhabited cloisters exercised upon the life of families, of which an example may be witnessed in the beautiful inci-

\* Hist. du Diocese de Troyes. 40.

† Chardon Hist. de Sacramens, tom V.

‡ Luc. II. 36.

§ Parad. III.

|| Bibliothec. Cluniacens.

dent related in the life of Du Guesclin, who, when a boy, owed his first encouragement, and perhaps the seeds of his future greatness, to the charitable and benignant remonstrance in his behalf, which his aunt, who was a nun in a neighboring cloister, made with his parents, who were in the habit of despising and ill-treating him; for so moved was his young heart by the look of mildness of the nun, that, it is said, from the same hour his whole character seemed changed, and he became an object of as much satisfaction in his father's house, as he had before been of disgust and aversion.\* In the Lord of the Isles there is a parallel instance.

"With sudden impulse forward sprung  
The page, and on her neck he hung;  
Then recollected instantly,  
His head he stoop'd and bent his knee,  
Kiss'd twice the hand of Isabel."†

St. Lucia, in the convent of St. Christina of the Seven Fountains at Bologna, had been frequently seen by a certain noble youth, as she knelt at the grated window of her chamber, which looked into the church. Perceiving the impression which had been made on this stranger, who appeared to come often to the convent for the purpose of beholding her, she forsook the window, and contented herself with hearing mass from the farthest extremity of her cell, desiring to please Him alone who seeth in secret. The youth in despair departed to a remote and barbarous land, in company with the two thousand Bolognese, who, in the year 1190, went against the Saracens; and, in the meantime, Lucia slept in Christ. The Christians being defeated, and the youth taken prisoner, he was required either to deny his faith, or to suffer death. In his dungeon, the memory of her whom he had so often seen at the grate of the church in happy days came afresh to his mind, and he cried, "O Lucia, virgin of Christ, if thou canst prevail with our Lord, help me with thy prayers, and deliver me now in this distress." Ambrosius of Camaldoli relates that the same night the youth found himself at liberty, that he returned to Bologna, carrying his chains with pious gratitude, and that he placed them devoutly upon her tomb.‡

So interwoven was the ideal of religious cloistered women with every kind of spiritual assistance, that there were families, if you will hear domestic annals, which believed that three nuns always appeared in some part of the house before the death of any of their members, to give them salutary warning. This has been long affirmed of one ancient family in the north of England; and Cardan relates a tradition somewhat similar, respecting a noble house of Parma.§

The travels of the nuns were another mode of communicating the saintly influence of the cloister to the manners of society. When St. Theresa travelled with some of her nuns, she used to carry a little bell with her, to sound at the usual hours

\* Vie de Du Guesclin, les Vies des grand Capitains Français.

† IV.

‡ Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XXX.

§ De varietate rerum.

for prayer and silence, as if still in the monastery, and, during these intervals, the mule drivers and conductors of the wagons would never address them. On one occasion, as she travelled with three or four nuns, after leaving Toledo, the crowds that followed her made it necessary sometimes to have guards at the door of the poor people's houses when she stopped for refreshment. The news of her journey spread before her, and every one was ambitious of the honor of receiving her under his roof. A rich laborer, hearing that she was to pass through his village, ornamented his house, prepared a good dinner, and assembled all his family; he even collected all his flocks, that Theresa might bless them. As she could not remain in that village, the good laborer came out of his house with all his train, to receive her blessing in the street. Nor was this influence confined to those who beheld the cloistered sisters on their journeys, or who received them as guests into their houses as they passed. While remaining within the enclosures, the example and the memory of their sanctity produced no less effect upon the minds of the people, than did their holy prayers and faith in the mind of God, inducing him to show mercy upon those who were united with them in the mystic bond of the communion of saints. There are few volumes of epistolary correspondence belonging to the middle ages, which do not contain proof of the efficacy of this channel for communicating the influence of the cloister to persons who were in the world.

We read that no one ever approached St. Catherine of Sienna, without departing a better person. Who has not heard of the meek Hildegard, who drew the court of kings to the peaceful shores of Bingen's pool, and who was to so many wanderers on the way an odor of life and salvation? No one need be told of the influence which is exercised in our age, by any individual eminently distinguished in a political or literary capacity. We find that he is consulted by persons from all countries of Europe: he commissions congenial minds to develop or revolutionize, according to the passions which move him at the time, the institutions which have existed in distant nations from the most remote antiquity. Well, during the middle ages, there were also individuals who exercised this extraordinary privilege; but what seems marvellous and incredible, though most true, these persons were saints; not merely learned monks, acting as philosophers in the schools of their cloister, or as statesmen, as the ministers of kings; not merely doctors and pontiffs, on their chairs of ecclesiastical erudition, but simple maidens, daughters of the people, shepherdesses, and nuns. What dignity of rank, what eminence of genius, what pride of learning, did not yield lowly and devout homage to the meek Hildegard? Pope Anastasius writes to her, his beloved daughter in Christ, to beseech her prayers and those of her sisters on the mountain of St. Robert, near Bingen. Pope Adrian writes to her to confirm her in her good resolutions unto the end. Pope Eugene and Alexander the Third also write to her. Arnold, Archbishop of Mayence, writes to her, the devout virgin and abbess, not doubting of the gifts of God, and asking her prayers, that, by their assistance, his days



may pass in the fear and love of his Creator. A multitude of bishops from all countries, even from Jerusalem, as also innumerable monks, philosophers, and learned masters from Italy and France, write to her in terms of humility, begging her prayers, and desiring to have the consolation of her mystic and angelic salutations, to whom her answers breathe a solemn strain of prophetic counsel, which announce, in no disguised language, the need of amendment in which some then stood.

Thus, to Arnold, archbishop of Mayence, she says "Wherefore do you hide your face from God, as if in perturbation of your angry mind? For I do not offer mystical words from myself, but according to what I behold in that living light; so that often what my mind does not desire, and what my will does not seek, is shown to me in a manner which constrains me to see it." Her answers are always received in a spirit of humility and penitence. Rudolph, the bishop of Liege, writes to her as follows: "In great distress of mind and body, I have desired to write to you, because I greatly need the clemency of God, whom I acknowledge I have offended and irritated by innumerable evils. Therefore, beloved sister, since I know that God is truly with you, I beseech your sanctity by his mercy, to stretch out a hand to me in this distress. Be it your care, by devout prayers, to withdraw me from negligence; and, in answer to me, write whatever has been shown to you from that unfailing and living light to awaken my sleep. May the most merciful God grant that I may receive consolation from your writings, and that by the help of your intercession, I may attain to the last mansion of eternal quiet."

The reply of Hildegard was in these terms: "The Living Light saith the ways of the Scripture are straight to the lofty mountains, where flowers exhale their precious fragrance, and where the sweetest wind breathers, bearing delicious odor, and where roses and lilies display their beauteous faces. For a time, the mount had not appeared on account of the darkness of the blind, living air, and because the Son of the Most High had not as yet enlightened the world. Then came the sun from the east enlightening the world, and all the people beheld its splendor. And the day was very bright, and a sweet sound arose. O shepherds, mourn and weep, for the mount is obscured with black clouds. But be thou a good shepherd, and noble in manners, and as the eagle gazes at the sun, so do you, and bring back wanderers to their country; and bear a light to this world, that your soul may live, and that you may hear that sweetest voice from the supreme Judge. Euge serve bone et fidelis. Therefore, O thou leader of the people, win a good victory, correct the erring, and cleanse the beautiful pearls from filth, that they may be fit for the highest King. May God protect thee, and deliver thy soul from eternal pain." The Emperor Conrad writes to Hildegard, and says, "Being prevented by the regal state, and harassed with divers troubles and storms, we cannot see you as we desire, yet we will not omit letters, which may pass to you. For, as we hear, there truly abounds in you,

the confession of the highest praise, by the sanctity of an innocent life, and by the grandeur of the Spirit wondrously coming upon you. Therefore, though we lead a secular life, we hasten to you, we fly to you, and humbly beg the suffrage of your prayers and exhortations, since we live far otherwise than as we ought; but know for certain, that in all your necessity, to the utmost of our power, we will endeavor to serve you and your sisters; therefore, I commend to your prayers, my son also, as well as myself, who I hope will survive me." In reply, she says, "O king, remain in God, and cast off the deformity of your mind, since God preserves all who seek him purely and devoutly. So hold your kingdom, and administer justice, that you may not become an alien from the supernal kingdom. To you, therefore, saith God, Be corrected, that you may come purified to those times in which you will no longer blush at your own actions." Philip, count of Flanders, writes to her in the same humble strain, but we have already seen his letter in a former book.\*

Of the holy recluses I made mention elsewhere, when examining the ancient churches in which their cells are found, the influence of whose sanctity must not be overlooked here. The pontificate of Hugo, archbishop of Palermo, in the year 1170, was rendered celebrated by that holy anchoress, the delight and safety of Palermo. The virgin Rosaly, the darling of each heart, who from all the youth of Sicily, retired to serve God in the solitude of mountain grottoes, echoing to the billow's sound. Sprung from Charlemagne by the kings of Italy, daughter of Sinnibald, bred in the court of Margaret, wife of King William, she forsook the honors and pleasures of the world, and retired to a cave in the mountains, first of Quisquinæ, and then to Ercta, commonly called Peregrini, near Palermo. In the caverns of Quisquinæ she made, as it were, profession of the anachoretic life, carving on their rocky side, with her own hand, these lines: "*Ego Rosalia Sinnibaldi Quisquinæ et Rosarum domini filia, amore Domini mei Jesu Christi in hoc antro habitare decrevi.*" What liquid delights she drew here from God, what converse she had with celestial messengers, can be conjectured by those who know the rich liberality of Jesus, according to the promise of an hundred fold in the Gospel, and who have heard a maiden's sigh for solitude and heaven. The year of her death is uncertain, but her remains were discovered in the year 1624, during the plague, in a cave on Mount Ercta, under a huge stone, which had often baffled the exertions of the curious. On this occasion, however, having greater perseverance, they succeeded, with repeated strokes of iron bars, in breaking through it, when they found the bones of the virgin Rosalia; falling on their knees, they kissed the sacred relics. Upon applying, however, to Jannettino Doria, the holy archbishop, he refused to have them exposed to public veneration, until the archives of Palermo, the constant tradition, and the consent of the citizens were found to agree in testimony. It was in the month of January that these bones, as gems of paradise, were borne on the shoulders of the first no-

\* Chronic. Hirsaugiensis, I.

bility through the streets of the capital and placed in the cathedral, where a marble inscription recorded that she had been the means, under divine Providence, of preserving the faithful people, as a multitude of miracles attested. Her festivals were afterwards celebrated on the 15th of July and on the 2nd of September. She is represented in many ancient paintings, in different churches of Sicily, in the habit of an anchoress, having a cross and a book in her hand.\*

At Lyons, from the time of St. Eucherius, there had always been devout women, who, under the name of recluses of St. Mary Magdalen, of St. Marguerite, and of St. Helena, shut themselves up in different parts of the city, spending their days in perpetual prayer, and receiving their food only through a window. A certain quantity of corn had been always set apart from the archiepiscopal granaries for their support. "When Raymond the archbishop," as the ancient document says, "being ill informed, and at the suggestions of some who had not God before their eyes, ordained that this allowance should be withheld in future, the recluses remonstrated, and his successor, Guillaume de Thureio, in the year 1359, restored that ancient custom, observing, in his reply, that they were public benefactors, in praying always for the archbishops, for the holy church, for the city, and for all the people." Barald de Lanieux, seigneur of Iseroa, in 1374, left a certain sum in his testament to each of these pious women of the city and suburbs of Lyons. Of the eleven ancient recluseries, the ruins of three, one near the walls, another in the vineyard of St. Martin, and another, called of St. Clair, near the Rhone, were to be seen when Paradin wrote his history.† Frequently the recluses of the middle age were widows. Thus in the Nibelungen poem, Kriemhild, after the death of Sifrids, takes up her residence near the cathedral of Worms. Before the beginning of the war against the Huns, the mighty count Ulrich lived at Buckhorn, on the lake of Constance, with his wife, Wendelgard, niece of the emperor Otho I., in a happy and blessed union. Dreadful was the shock of this noble lady when intelligence arrived of her husband having fallen in battle against the Huns. To console herself in this calamity, she went to St. Gall, and fixed her habitation near St. Manges's church, received consecration from the bishop, and under the guidance of the blessed Wiborad, devoted herself wholly to works of virtue, with the intention of becoming a recluse. Every year she went from St. Gall to Buckhorn, to honor the memory of her noble lord with a festal anniversary. Once, as she was thus with her own hands distributing alms, a poor man demanded eagerly a garment, and seizing that which she offered, pulled her towards himself with it, and kissed her. Wendelgard, astonished and afflicted, directed her servants to punish this audacious beggar, when lo! showing a certain scar, he enabled her to discover in him her count Ulrich, whom she had thought dead. The history relates that Wendelgard was immediately restored to him, after the monks had declared her consecration null.‡

\*Sicilia Sacra, I. p. 101.

† Paradin Hist. de Lyon. Lib. II. c. 80.

‡ Ildefons von Arx Geschichte des St. Gallen, I. 225.



The fate of Wiborad, her holy instructress, was singular and full of pity. She alone fell a victim, when in the year 925, the Huns first came to St. Gall. Every one else had fled. The pagans supposed that there was a treasure concealed in her cell, and as they could find no door, they entered it through the roof, and finding only the poor recluse at her prayers, they struck her head with a halbert, inflicting a wound by which she bled to death. "*Wiborad a paganis occisa*," says the catalogue of the monks of St. Gall. "*Wiborad martyrazata est*," say the *Annales Hepidanni*. She was born in Kringnon in Argovia; she had learned from her brother, Hitto, to repeat the Psalms in Latin, had made a pilgrimage to Rome, and on her return had led a cloisteral life with two maidens, in a house near the cathedral of Constance, under the instruction of the recluse Zilia. After four years, she removed to St. Mangel's church, at St. Gall, where, in 915, she caused herself to be enclosed by bishop Salomon. She passed her time in prayer, weaving cloth, and giving instructions to persons of all classes, who regarded her with veneration, to whom she used to speak through her little window, exhorting them to love virtue, and avoid sin. Especially she employed herself in guiding the pious women, who came there for the purposes of becoming either recluses, as the noble virgin Raschild, or nuns, as her two maids, Bertrada and Gebena, or consecrated widows, as the countess Wendelgard. After eight days the body of the blessed woman was committed to the earth, the whole community of the cloister assisting. She was regarded immediately as a martyr, and Abbot Engelbert prescribed that her anniversary should be celebrated at St. Mary's church, which order was confirmed by Pope Clement II., who canonized her. In later times a chapel was erected under her invocation near that church, and a chaplain appointed to serve it.\*

The names of many recluses occur in the chronicles of the tenth century. Kerhild, the aunt of St. Notker, Bertrad, the young widow, Gisela, Diemut, Udalgard, Ina, Gotelinda, and others, many of whom attained to a great age, followed this mode of life. Kerhild continued in her cell fifty-six years, Bertrad twenty-two years, and Gotelinda is described as being a very aged penitent.† With what affection the Germans still cling to the memory of the recluses, may be witnessed in Tieck's affecting tragedy, entitled the life and death of the holy Genoveva, who had been wife to count Siegfried, a warrior under Charles Martel; the cave which this saint inhabited in the forest near Andernach, may still be seen. Certainly the cavern of St. Rosalie, on the Sicilian shore, and the mountain where Geneviève tended her flock, are, in the ideas of every Catholic poet embalmed with the fragrant of heaven. The life of the holy Dorothea is recorded in detail by the historian of Prussia, as forming one of the most interesting episodes in the annals of that nation.‡ At her earnest entreaty, and by consent of the bishop, in the church of St. John at Marienwerder, a cell was built, into which, on the

\* Ildefons von Arx Geschichte des St. Gallen, I. 216.

† Ekehard in Lib. Bened. 154.

‡ Voight. Geschichte Preussens, V. 617.

second of May, in the year 1393, St. Dorothea was admitted as a recluse, where she was enclosed by her confessor, John of Marienwerder, and there she spent the rest of her life in constant prayer and meditation, every day receiving our Lord in communion, and speaking to no one without permission, till the night of the twenty-sixth of June, in the year 1394, when she departed in great peace, and sweetness, to the embraces of her heavenly spouse. Then after three days, the cell was opened, and her body transported with great solemnity, by order of the bishop, John of Pomerania, to the cathedral of Marienwerder, where it was buried under a pompous tomb, at which innumerable miracles were immediately wrought, as a crowd of contemporary authors attest ; so that multitudes of sick were carried thither from distant lands to be healed, and whither an innumerable host of devout pilgrims always streamed on her anniversary, to offer up their prayers, and to revere her relics.\*

The historian of the Teutonic order, concludes his fifth book with this account of St. Dorothea, and these are his last words, "In the evening of this century which had so often beheld the soil of Prussia and Lithuania, dyed with blood, devastated by wild war, laid waste by flames, by plunderers and slayers, and filled with lamentation and woe, over this wild and fearful scene stands the form of the holy penitent, as a consoling and lofty vision of charity and peace." "She lived in the memories of men," to use the words of the grand master, Konrad von Jungingen, "as a patron against calumny, a nurse of piety against sorrow, a light of the holy church, an oil of mercy ; to the frigid a fire of charity, and to the dead in corporal and spiritual miseries, a refreshing and reviving joy." The solemnity of an ecclesiastical origin was not essential to this mode of life, which was found to yield such enjoyments. Margaret Ruttegerin lived as a recluse in her own house and garden at St. Gall, and obtained from abbot Henry IV., an order that on her death the church should take care of this house until some other woman should announce an intention of becoming a recluse, to whom it was to be conceded. In the eleventh century these recluses began to live no longer in solitude, but three, six, or eight together, in enclosures styled closes, near monasteries or churches. In the twelfth century, the daughters of peasants, who had not as much facility for being received into regular cloisters, began to adopt in great numbers this manner of life, and to inhabit huts in woods, or on the points of rocks, or in deep valleys, and funds were left by devout persons for supporting them.† Thus at St. Gall there were the close of St. Mangan, the close of St. John, the close of St. Toergen, the close of St. Leonard's church, and the wood cell of Hundtobel, inhabited by wood sisters : at Pffeffer there were similar closes and cells as at most other places.

It is time now to inquire what was the original source and principle the channels and operations of which we have witnessed ? What was the philos-

\* Voight. Geschichte Preussens, V. 676.

† Chronic. Bertholdi Constant. ad an. 1091.

ophical idea that presided over the institutions of the cloisteral life? St. Chrysostom will tell you that "it was simply an observation of the greater freedom furnished by that state which cut off by the root all human disturbances, and enabled the soul to apply all its faculties to the things of God."\* Hence in the acts of the Benedictines, in the ninth century, we read of hospices being erected for unmarried men as well as for widows. Writers of a certain class, in modern times, are very indignant that the Church should sanction an institution which admits of there being maidens, who by their own choice are

"For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold, fruitless moon."

But impartial historians are obliged to pay a tribute of admiration to that order by means of which such a multitude of noble intelligences were able to consecrate themselves in so many various ways to every service that can exalt and console the human race, some in solitude and seclusion taking refuge in the immensity of God, others making vows to assist the poor, to tend the sick, to educate orphans: nor have there been wanting to our times philosophers who could defend with eloquent pens from the brutal scoffs of the self-styled rational school, those holy communities, where the daughters of the poor, along with the Montmorencis, the Bourbons, and the Condès, may follow the example of those illustrious Roman ladies, celebrated by St. Jerome, who were descended from the Scipios and the Emilian blood, and devote themselves in peace to the object of their immense desire. The nun of the middle ages was not a victim as modern writers would lead men to suppose. Eleanora, daughter of the Earl of Richmond, and the sister of Arthur of Brittany, on being commanded by her father to remove from the convent of Ambresbury to Fontevrault, had no other fear but that of being obliged to return to the world; to obviate which danger, she took the solemn vows before leaving England.† Neither was such the opinion of persons who remained in society. Observe the style in which Francis Picus of Mirandula writes to his sister, who is a nun: "We rejoice in the Lord, dearest sister, and we contemplate with amazement what good things God hath done for your soul, who not only hath shown to you the way of perfection, but hath led you, as it were, by the hand, and introduced you within the narrow door. You have left brothers, parents, the world and all its blandishments, and fled naked to the standard of the cross. O happy souls, to whom God hath given the will of choosing poverty, that they may receive an hundredfold in this life, sisters, and mothers, and consolations ineffable, and in the future world an eternal crown of glory."‡

And now methinks it will cast great light upon history to visit one of these convents of the middle age.

\* Tractat. de Virginitate.

† Lobineau Hist. de Bret. Liv. V.

‡ Joan. Francis Picus. Mirand. Epist. Lib. IV.



"Where peaceful rule, and duty free,  
Walks hand in hand with charity ;  
Where oft devotion's tranced glow  
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,  
That the enraptured sisters see  
High vision and deep mystery;"

a privilege not confined to the sisters of St. Hilda, if you will only credit the historians of Prussia, who attest that St. Dorothea predicted the death of the grand master of the Teutonic Order, Konrad Von Wallenrod, and the choice and fate of his successor,\* or the ancient tradition which relates that St. Bridget warned pope St. Urban V. not to proceed with his intended voyage for the sake of making peace between France and England, and that the event of his death immediately on his arriving at Avignon, proved the more than human foresight which had dictated her counsel. A few detached histories will show what was in general the object of these foundations, and the character of those who accomplished it. Queen Blanche, in her charter of foundation to the abbey of Maubuisson, says that she has designed that house for nuns of the Cistercian order, who may pray God for the souls of Alphonso, King of Castille, her father, and of Eleanor, her mother. After the first abbess, who was but a simple nun who had been removed from the abbey of St. Anthony, at Paris, almost all the abbesses were women of high and royal blood, Montmorencis, De Moneys, D'Iveys, D'Etoutevilles, De Dintevilles, D'Annebaults, and D'Estrées. Louisa-Mary, Palatine of Bavaria, daughter of Frederic IV. King of Bohemia, having abjured heresy in 1658, took the veil here, and became abbess. She was an admirable artist, and used to present her holy paintings to the house, and to the parish churches of the neighborhood. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the Gothic church of this royal abbey of Maubuisson. Queen Blanche was buried in the middle of the choir, under a tomb of brass, representing her figure, and containing eight Latin lines, the last of which records that she died a nun—

"Tanta prius, talis jacet hic pauper monialis."

Mathew Paris mentions that she took the veil before her death, that her crown was placed over it, and that she was thus buried.† So early as the year 670, we find a rich lady named Chrotilda building a convent for nuns at Bruyeres, in the diocese of Paris, and her niece becoming the first abbess.‡ Magdalen Tasse, sister of St. Francis Xavier, after being in her youth lady of honor to queen Isabella, abandoned the court of Arragon for solitude and the cross. She became abbess of the convent of St. Clare, at Gandia, where she practised an act of heroic charity in her last moments, imploring an easy death for a sister, and the sufferings to which she knew by revelation that sister had been destined for herself. Louise-Marie de

\* Voigt. Geschichte Preussens, V. † Lebeuf. Hist du diocese de Paris, tom. IV. 188.  
‡ Id. IX. 236.

France, daughter of Louis XV., who took the veil in the convent of the Carmelites, at St. Denis, used often to speak of the happiness of her condition in comparison with her former state. "As we have customs," she used to say, "so had the court, but the latter were far more severe than the former. In the evening at five I am now summoned to prayer; formerly I had to assist at play. At nine the bell calls me to matins; at Versailles, at that hour, I used to be called to the theatre." It was a frequent custom for ladies to make retreats in convents, where some even remained during their lives. Henrietta Maria of France, Queen of England, founded a convent of the visitation at Chaillot, in which she spent the year 1658. Louisa, Palatine of Bavaria, her niece, came to her there, and remained a year edifying all the community, leading the life of a nun without having taken the habit. The blessed Isabella, sister of St. Louis, lived in a separate apartment in the abbey of Longchamps, without being a professed nun. Two princesses of the blood, Blanche of France, fourth daughter of Philippe le Long and Jane of Navarre, died in that house, having taken the veil. King Philip used frequently to visit this convent, and lodge there, in which also he died, after his daughter had taken the veil. When Conan-le-gros, Prince of Brittany, visited Fontevrault with his mother, he saw there Matilda of Anjou, his cousin, already a widow before the age of twenty, who had resolved thenceforth to have no other spouse but the Son of God.\* Details of this kind show how the two lives were intermixed, and what an action must have been exercised upon society by the religious communities of women. The portrait of the noble Abbess of St. Hilda, though by a modern poet who too often suffers the prejudices of a sect to disfigure his historical pictures, has so much resemblance to the real character that it cannot be viewed without pleasure :

"The Abbess was of noble blood  
 But early took the veil and hood,  
 Ere upon life she cast a look,  
 Or knew the world that she forsook.  
 Love, to her ear, was but a name  
 Combined with vanity and shame;  
 Her hopes, her fears, her joys were all  
 Bounded within the cloister wall:  
 And her ambition's highest aim  
 To emulate Saint Hilda's fame:  
 For this she gave her ample dower  
 To raise the convent's eastern tower;  
 For this, with carving rare and quaint,  
 She decked the chapel of the saint,  
 And gave the relique-shrine of cost  
 With ivory and gems embost;  
 The poor her convent's bounty blest,  
 The pilgrim in its halls found rest."

\* Lobineau Hist de Bret. Liv. IV.

We have, however, a portrait of St. Hilda, from the hand of the venerable Bede. He says, that "while abbess of the monastery of Tadcaster, bishop Aidan and all the religious men that were acquainted with her, were so taken with her wisdom, and her affection to the service of God, that they visited her often, had a great respect for her, and diligently instructed her in all good. Her wisdom and prudence were so great that not only persons of an inferior rank resorted to her for counsel in their necessities, but even kings and princes sometimes sought and followed her advice. Nor was this servant of Christ, Abbess Hilda, (who for her extraordinary piety and grace was called mother, by all who knew her) an example of life only in her own monastery; she also afforded occasions of salvation and correction to very many living at a great distance, who had the happiness to hear by fame of her industry and virtue."

Mabillon ascribes to the influence of St. Boniface what he terms "the singular ornament of his order," viz. the learning of the nuns who followed the Benedictine rule. Willibald describes those of Britain as profound in the studies usual to men; and in Germany the same example was followed, so that of Chunihilt and Berathgit we read, "*Valdæ eruditæ in liberali scientia*;" and Lieba is described as so devoted to study, that "excepting when at prayer, the divine pages never left her hands." She had been instructed in grammar, and the other liberal arts at an early age, and she became in the end most learned. Nay, the nuns of this age followed the example of the monks in transcribing books, and even in composing others. Those of the monastery of Eikers, in Belgium, became celebrated for their labors in reading and meditating, in writing and in painting. It is recorded of the abbesses Harlind and Renild, that besides works of embroidery and weaving, they had written with their own hands, the four Gospels, the whole Psalter, and many other books of the divine Scripture, which they ornamented with liquid gold, gems, and pearls. In an earlier age, it is recorded of Cæsaria, Abbess of Arles, that "her nuns, having her for mistress, wrote out beautifully several divine books, during the time that was spent between psalmody and fasting, vigils and readings." A theme of general admiration in Germany had been the learning of Gertrude, and Hroswita, the nun of Gandersheim, who had been an admirable poet, and who sung in verse the deeds of the emperor Otho I.\* Gervaise remarks, that "the problems of Heloise, or the questions on the sacred Scriptures which she and her nuns used to propose to Abeillard, prove by the choice of difficulties, that these sisters exercised an acute sense of discernment." How interesting is the following epistle of Peter the venerable to the Abbess Heloise:—"When I was young, I remember hearing of your renown, not indeed at that time of your religion, but of your honest and laudable studies. I used to hear that a woman, although bound in the trammels of the world, applied herself diligently to literary pursuits, and to the study of secular wisdom, so as to surpass not only other

\* In III. Sæcul. Benedict. §. 4.



women, but almost all men. Soon after, when it pleased the Most High to call you by his grace, you changed the nature of your studies, as a truly philosophic woman; for logic substituting the Gospel, for physics the apostle, for Plato Christ, for the academy the cloister. You have carried off spoils from conquered enemies, and have returned with Egyptian treasures, after passing the desert of this pilgrimage, to erect a precious tabernacle in your heart to God. These things, sister beloved in the Lord, I say to you, not through adulation, but for the sake of exhortation, that you may be rendered more careful to preserve that good, and more ardent to excite the holy sisters who are subject to you; for though a woman, you are one of those animals that Ezekiel the prophet beheld, which ought not only to burn like a coal, but like a lamp to burn and shine. To you indeed remains the palm of humility and of discipline. It is sweet to me to prolong discourse with you, for I am delighted with your celebrated erudition, and still more enchanted with the fame of your sanctity.\*" Thus was perpetuated in the holy communities of the middle age that phenomenon of learned religious women, which had so much edified the Church in early times, of which we find so many examples in the letters of St. Jerome. He says that Marcella acquired in a few months a knowledge which he had not himself obtained till after the labor of many years. "What virtue did I find in her! what penetration, what purity, what holiness! She became so learned, that after my departure, whenever any difficulty was found in any obscure passage of my book, people used to apply to her, as to a judge; but as she possessed to a sovereign degree that delicate tact which dictates always what is becoming, she used to communicate her ideas, even those that she owed wholly to the penetration of her mind, as having been suggested to her either by me or by some one else, so that while instructing others, she appeared to be a pupil herself; for she remembered the prohibition of the apostle."†

We have seen the influence which the religious communities of women, and the example of holy recluses, must have produced upon the general manners of society during the ages of faith. Let us proceed to speak of the material condition of women in the middle ages, in relation to the social order.

No one need be told of the moral and social state in which Christianity found women when it commenced its visible eternal course. There were, it is true, some Pagan women who had a strong disposition to embrace the Jewish religion, and to worship the true God, whom we find styled in the Latin epitaphs, "*religionis, Judaicæ metuentes*." Thus we have an inscription to this effect, "*Aurelius Soter, et Aurelius Stephanus Soteriæ matri pientissimæ, religioni Judaicæ metuenti*." Such women had but a short step to make to become Christians, as in like manner there are multitudes of women born and educated under the modern discipline who entertain a certain fear and instinctive veneration for the Catholic

\* S. Petri Ven. Abb. Clun. Epist. Lib. IV. 21. Bibliothec. Cluniacensis.

† 1. Cor. xiv. 34. S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Principiam, Virg.

Church, and whose conversion is at all times an easy task to those who medicine the soul. Besides these, moreover, there were, in the worst times, among the Gentiles, some few, "in whom," as Cicero says, alluding to Cœcilia, "remained as if for the sake of example, the vestiges of ancient duty."\* Pliny speaks in remarkable terms, of Fannia, a Roman matron, "*Quæ castitas illius !*" he exclaims, "*quæ sanctitas ! quanta gravitas ! quanta constantia ! non minus amabilis quam veneranda !*"† The admirers of the Pythagorean discipline could enumerate seventeen women whom, in different ages, it had formed to illustrious virtue.‡ The old poets, too, commemorated the fleetness in hunting of Atalanta, the natural affection of Anticlea, the marital love of Alcestis, and the generous soul of Macheira. Celebrated were the philosophic apophthegms of Theana the Pythagorean, whom Didymus affirms to have been the first woman to philosophize and write poems, as also the science of Themisto, the wife of Zoilus ; of Lampsacene, the wife of Leontius ; and of Muia, the daughter of Theanes. All the daughters of Diodorus, Menexene, Argeia, Theagnis, Artemesia, and Pantacleia, were dialectitians. Arete the Cyrenean, instructed her son Aristippus, surnamed *τον μητροδιδασκτον*. With Plato philosophized Lastheneia the Arcadian, and Axiothea the Phliasian, and with Socrates, Aspasia. St. Clemens of Alexandria says, "it would be long to tell of Corinna and Telesilla, of Sappho, and Eirene the daughter of Cratinus, and of Anaxandra, and of many others."§ Nevertheless the opinion of the ancients respecting the rank which ought to be assigned to women, was but little in harmony with these examples. The Athenian in Plato, speaks of it as a principle acknowledged on all hands, that the female sex is worse disposed towards virtue than the male,|| which even Æschylus seems ready to admit, for his Minerva delivers the same judgment :

*τὸ δ' ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα,  
ἄπαντι θυμῷ ¶*

Pericles declares that the sum of female virtue consists in being spoken of as little as possible, whether for good or evil ;\*\* and, in fact, we find that St. Jerome has to apologize to the Gentiles for dwelling at length on the praise of women : for he justifies himself by observing that Christ whose religion he preaches to them, did not disdain to have the three Marys for his disciples, and that it was to women he first showed himself after his resurrection.†† The social condition of that sex corresponded with these narrow views. Wherever Christianity found woman, she was without security, and often held under a cruel and sanguinary despotism. It is an historical fact, though it seems hardly credible, that the Pagan Prussians had a custom of killing every female child in each family excepting one ; and the bull of Honorius the Third denounces this enormous barbarity, as if invented to oppose the propagation of the human race. Certainly the diabolic

\* Pro S. Roscio Amer. † Epist. VII. 19. ‡ Jamblich. de Pythagoric. vita. cap. 36.

§ Stromat. Lib. IV. c. 19.

|| De Legibus, Lib. VI.

¶ Eumenid. 737.

\*\* Thucyd. II. 45.

†† St. Hieronym. Epist. ad Principiam, Virg.

tradition of which I shall hereafter speak is here. In the ancient civilization of the Gentiles, the wife in general was a personage so obscure and unimportant, that Medea, in the tragedy, is represented as not knowing whether the king Ægeus is married or not.\* The women amongst the Dorians, indeed were addressed by the title of ladies, *δέσποιναι*, a title uncommon in Greece, expressive of the estimation in which they were held; but the wives of the Ionians, according to Herodotus, did not even dare to address their husbands by their proper names; yet, as Medea says, women then in marriage had but one hope,

*ἡμῖν δ' ἀνάγκη πρὸς μίαν φυχήν βλέπειν.†*

We find the women of the ancient drama continually lamenting the destiny which rules them:

*πάντων δ' ὅσ' ἔστ' ἔμψυχα, καὶ γνώμην ἔχει,  
γυναικες ἐσμέν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν.‡*

From this reality of degradation and sorrow, all the ideas communicated by the Christian religion, were calculated, indeed, to deliver woman; but it should be remembered, that it was the doctrine of virginity, as a French writer truly observes, which has more than all contributed to their emancipation. Before this doctrine was delivered or confirmed by Christianity, the woman could not treat upon equal terms with the man; but by making the virginal state a new condition, and that independent of all positive institutions, Christianity changed every thing; for, from the first moment that there was a free and voluntary condition of life for women, they had a personal importance; and this doctrine of virginity, which seems fatal to marriage, on the contrary constituted its new force and its grandeur; for, from this moment, it was what it had never been before, a free and reciprocal alliance. The tone and manners of society, indeed, at present, sufficiently prove that the modern philosophic systems, by attaching ridicule to the virginal state, have undermined the edifice which secured the social dignity and security of women,

With respect to the ancients, I know not whether the fact that they had not before them the same examples as have been given to Christian ages, may be admitted as some extenuation; their ideal of woman was certainly wholly different from that which the Catholic religion has created. There were, indeed, examples, the memory of which can never perish, when, as St. Augustin says, one woman had more humanity than a whole nation;§ but, in general, the angel of mercy, the mild and gracious being, full of pity for all suffering, and at the same time the maiden who could support any labor for the love of God's Church, like Sabine Steinbach, in the thirteenth century, who worked at the towers of the cathedral of Strasburg, or like the heroic daughters of St. Vincent of Paul, who endured privations and toils that seem incredible, was a character that the heathen society

\* Eurip. Med. 670.

† 249.

‡ Id. 223.

§ De Civitate Dei, Lib. III. 19.



could not have conceived. We must not seek by false praise to exalt the moral worth of the ancients beyond its real value.

It is the Catholic religion, or its traditionary force, which has provided that asylum for the suffering and discouraged heart. When the gladiators used to ask for life, the Delias, Lesbias, Cynthias, Lydias, all these women of Tibullus, Catullus, Propertius, and Horace, would give the signal for death with the same hand that the Muses had so often sung. It is the author of the *Martyrs* who makes this observation.\* What a contrast to the ideal of women in ages of faith, when a philosopher, like Marsilius Ficinus, could find no stronger reason for recommending marriage to his friend Antonio Pelocta, than that unless he knew what it was to see a wife in sorrow, he would not know how to feel compassion for the calamities of others.† Women of the Catholic type, who could thus soften the hearts of obdurate men, and fill their souls with infinite and truly divine pity, who could suggest to the poets, of the twelfth century, who collected and no doubt retouched the *Nibelungen*, that exquisite line, “the virtues of the maiden made other ladies fair;” who could inspire a Gerson and a St. Bonaventura with that thought, that there never was such an antidote to the fascination of sin as the beauteous face of the blessed virgin, which presented, as St. Ambrose and St. Jerome said, the image of her soul,—women, upon whom the ideal of Mary shed so sweet a light of sanctity, and who, in return, could enable men to understand, and in some measure behold, what was the innocence and piety, and grace, of that divine mother,—woman of that heroic devotion which we read of in the acts of holy martyrs, and to which in latter times Pacea bears so noble a testimony, when speaking of the pious French ladies during the last dreadful persecutions of the Church in France,‡—women, like the Andalusian maid, the fairest of the fair and all angelic, like the Spanish daughter in general, of grace indescribable, answering to the most lovely form of the imagination, appearing at the same time mystical and gay, and yet never wishing to turn aside from the spectacle of misery, when there is a possibility of alleviating it, who will throw down her mandolin, and quit the pageant of the castle hall, to bind up the beggar’s wounds, and heap coals of fire on the head of some blaspheming wretch,—these were, in truth, beings of a new creation, the fruits of that faith which could remove mountains, and of that spirit which renews the face of the earth. Admirable, indeed, was this restoration of nature which their virtues attested, for

“Where does the wisdom and the power divine  
In a more bright and sweet reflection shine?  
Where do we finer strokes and colors see  
Of the Creator, *s* real poetry?”

The saints and holy fathers are never weary in expressing their regard and admiration for these devoted daughters of the Church, who may often be represent-

\* Lib. III. 53.

† Epist. Lib. IV.

‡ *Memorie Storiche*, II. c. 2.

ed like St. Elizabeth in the old paintings, adorned with three crowns, to denote that as virgins, wives, and widows, their conversation was always most holy.\* Never was it, as St. Bernard says, from any feeling contrary to this intimate affection, that youth was so carefully admonished to retain its modesty. It was not that it should disdain what God hath made, but that it should fly from what man hath added ;† that as St. Augustin says, it might not meet with another Eve, nor suffer from that shade of tenderness which is produced by the foliage of the tree which supplied the first clothing to her nakedness.‡ Hear St. Jerome consoling Paula on the death of her daughter, the young widow Blesilla. Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that I may weep, not, as Jeremiah saith, for the wounds of my people, nor as Jesus, for the misery of Jerusalem, but that I may weep for sanctity, mercy, innocence, chasity, that I may weep for all virtues failing in one stroke of death ? I confess my affections. This whole book is written with tears. I call to witness Jesus, whom Blesilla now follows ; I call to witness the holy angels, whose fellowship she now enjoys, that my sorrow has equalled yours, Paula. Therefore, while a spirit rules these limbs, while the breath of life is granted to me, I swear that her name shall be ever on my tongue, to her will I dedicate my labors, for her will I spend my strength. There shall be no page that does not sound Blesilla ; and to whatever region these memorials of our discourse shall penetrate, there with them shall she be found.”§

Amidst the darkest scenes of history, we always meet with testimonies of the angelic graces of the women who stood near. The sons of Roger de Montgomeri, by the daughter of William Talvas, surnamed the Vagabond, were ferocious, greedy, and remorseless oppressors of the poor ; but William of Jumièges remarks at the same time, that his daughters, Emma, Matilda, Mabille, and Sibylle, were generous, honorable, and full of affability for the poor, as also for monks and the other servants of God.||

Behold St. Jane. Who is this image of mildness and sanctity, this foundress of the order of the Annunciation at Bourges, and who dies wearing its habit, after a life of great innocence and suffering ? She is the daughter of Louis the Eleventh of France.

Guilla had lately become the wife of the Marquis Rainerius, when St. Peter Damian wrote to her as follows ; “ Daughter, you have passed by marriage into a house sufficiently ample, indeed, but of evil manners ; eminent in riches, but confused by a depraved law of living. Endeavor to correct this. Let the confiscations of the poor be abolished ; put an end to all unjust customs, and to the oppression of the rustics. Let not the orphan’s food taste sweet in your mouth, and remember the fate of the wife of Count Hubert, your own brother, who per-

\* Wadding Annal. Minorum. tom. I. 1235. † De ordine vitæ ‡ St. August. Epist. ad Læt.  
§ Epist. XXII. ad Paulam || Hist. du Normand. Lib. VII. c. 16.

ished under the ruins of his castle, which fell to the ground the same day that she took away the swine of a widow, and spurned her, when she asked a portion of it, from the gate.”\* After some years, we find a summons sent to this Marquis, to appear within three weeks, in person or by legate, at Rome, before Gregory the Seventh, to show why he should not incur anathema, for slaying his brother with his own hand, and for other deeds against his own soul.† The letter of the saint shows, however, that much was in the power of the wife, even in cases the most discouraging. So also in the metrical history of the Countess Mathilda, by Donizo the Benedictine, we read of Ildegard often persuading her husband to follow better things.

“*Conjugis Attonis non fiat oblivio nobis  
Ildegarda quidem fuit hujus nomen amicæ  
Docta, gubernatrix, prudens, proba, consiliatrix  
Ad meliora virum suadebat sæpius ipsum,  
Cum quo Birsellum monachis fabricavit habendum.*”‡

That nothing was more intolerable than a rich woman, was the conviction of the Roman satirist ; § but Catholicism could even associate riches and the splendors of a throne with the graces and mildness of the female heart. In fact, during the ages of faith, the daughters of kings might often have heard addressed to themselves those words of the poet,

“*I hold you as a thing ensky’d, and sainted  
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit ;  
And to be talked with in sincerity  
As with a saint.*”

The character of Maude, wife of King Henry the First, is thus described,

“*Prospera non lætam fecere, nec aspera tristem,  
Aspera risus erant, prospera terra erant.  
Non decôr effecit fragilem, non sceptrâ superbam ;  
Sola potens humilis, sola pudica deeens.*”

She used to go every day in the Lent season to Westminster Abbey barefoot. She would wash and kiss the feet of the poor people and give them bountiful alms, for which, being reprehended by a courtier, she gave him a short answer, which is recorded by Robert of Gloucester.

“*Madame for Goddes love is this wel i doo  
To handle sich unclene lymmes, and to kisse so ;  
Foule wolde the kyng thynk if that hit he wiste,  
And ryght wel abylye hym er he your mouth kiste’.  
‘ Sur, sur,’ quod the Quene, ‘ be stille, why sayste thou so,  
Our Lord hymself ensample gaf so for to do.’ ”*

\* S. Pet. Damiani, Epist. 18. Lib. VII.

† Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XVIII.

‡ Vita comit. Mathild. Lib. I. c. 3. Muratori Rer. Italic. Scriptor. tom. V. § Juv. Sat. VI.



Pass to what land we will, it is still the same character which we meet everywhere. We behold it in Alice, duchess of Brittany, on whose tomb, in the Abbey of Villeneuve, we read

“Inter opes humilis ita vixit, quod sibi vilis  
Mundus erat pridem, licet arderet eidem.”

We behold it in Blanche of Navarre, who was commemorated on her tomb in the Abbey of Joie, as the mother of the poor, and the living rule of manners. We behold it in the ducal house of Tuscany, of which Donizo the Benedictine describes the illustrious line.

“Uxor Tedaldi fit Guillia dicta Ducatrix  
Hæc placuit parvis pietate, placebat et altis.”\*

Above all, in the person of the illustrious Mathilda, it appears in its full lustre.

“Prospera, non mutant, seu non hanc tristitia turbant.  
Bajulat hæc parvos, inopes sustentat et altos  
O cultrix Christi, quantum studiosa fuisti,  
A te non ullus vacuus, discessit homullus,  
Si Domini certum quisti fore discere servum.”

The memory of the Catholic lady must have been still fresh in the minds of his contemporaries, when Spenser gave that picture of the matron in his Fairy Queen.

“Whose only joy was to relieve the needes  
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helplesse pore.  
All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,  
And all the day in doing good and godly deedes.”†

With these meek saints we shall hereafter become more acquainted, when we come to visit the institutions of pity in reference to the benediction of the merciful. For the present, in relation to the justice of the middle ages, it will be sufficient of a few to speak. Women being unable, as St. Theresa observes, to preach by words, in consequence of the prohibition of the apostle, endeavoring always to preach by their actions.‡ It was Maria de Vignarod, duchess of Aiguillon, who instituted the house in Rome of the Priests of the Mission : and St. Frances, while her husband lived, wishing to withdraw the Roman matrons from secular pomps and vanity, founded at Rome the house of the Oblats, under the rule of St. Benedict, where, upon becoming a widow, she retired, after begging admission with tears.

The lady of Beaufort Ferrand was said to have embalmed with the odors of her example, the parish of Janvry, and others adjoining, in the diocese of Paris. Ancient books tell of her prodigious alms, her desire to procure instruction for

\* Vita Mathild. Lib. I. c. 4. Murat. Rer. Italic. Script. tom. V.

† Book I. 10.

‡ The Road of Perfection, chap. V.

the peasants, her protection of the curates in the exercise of their duty, restraining abuses, her zeal in instructing poor women, and their daughters, in visiting the sick and the dying, in accompanying the blessed Sacrament, on foot, to whatever distance it was carried, and in providing ornaments for the churches. She died in 1650.\* Lebeuf relates that at Bretigny the memory of the Lady of Berthevin, who died in 1587, was always in great veneration there, though there was no longer any one of her family in the country. The spot where she had been buried was known by tradition, though it was marked by no monument; and the people generally loved to repeat her name, as that of a holy woman who had made a blessed end.† In like manner, the wife of Bouchard de Montmorency, who died in the fourteenth century, being represented on a tomb in the Church of Houssaye, without any name or inscription, was, nevertheless, known by the people to have been named Anne; and so strong was the tradition of her holy life, that when the Abbé Lebeuf wrote his history of the Diocese of Paris, he says they used always to speak of her as the lady St. Anne.‡

Rohesia, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, chief justice of England, under Henry I., and wife to Geoffrey Mandeville, the first earl of Essex, erected a cross in the high way, on the spot where the town of Royston now stands; a pious work to keep the wayfarer in mind of Christ's passion; whereupon it was called "*Crux Rohesiæ*," before there was either church or town; but afterwards, when Eustach de Merch had founded there a little monastery of canons regular in honor of St. Thomas of Canterbury, there were inns built there, so that in process of time, by little and little, it grew to be a town which was called Rohesia's town, or Royston. There is here a curious grotto, into which I have often descended with religious reverence, the walls of which are covered with sacred images, and religious symbols, which were wrought, it is supposed, by the hands of this devout lady, who, as one tradition relates, became a recluse in her latter days. Innumerable are the memorials of female piety, which date from the middle ages. Marguerite, queen of Scotland, daughter of Edward, king of Hungary, who was the son of Edmond Ironside, and brother of Edward, king of England, was distinguished by the sanctity of her life, as well as by the nobleness of her blood, being sprung from a long line of kings. Among other good deeds, she rebuilt the convent of Iona, which Columban, the servant of God, had constructed in the time of Brude, king of the Picts, but which had fallen to ruin through the tempests of war, and length of years.§ The Saxon chronicles are full of allusions to the foundations made by devout women, such as the daughter of Erkenbert, king of Kent, who is styled "*holy damsel of an illustrious sire*." St. Bathilda, queen of the Franks, whom Corby in Picardy revered as its foundress, is minutely described by a writer who lived in the same age. "*Being of Saxon race*," he says, "*she was of*

\* Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocese de Paris*, tom. IX. 144.

† Id. XI. 292.

‡ Id. tom. XIV. 231.

§ Orderic. Vital. *Hist. Nor. Lib.* VIII.

a gracious and subtle form, and of a beautiful and cheerful countenance. To the king, her husband, she showed herself as an obedient wife; to the princes as a mother; to the priests as a daughter; to young men and boys as the best of nurses; to all as an amiable and gracious friend. She loved priests as fathers, and monks as brothers. To the poor she was a pious nurse, distributing great alms to them; she was always exhorting youths to religious studies, humbly supplicating the king for the Churches, and for the poor people, and daily commending herself with tears to Christ, the heavenly King.”\* Nor will it be an unworthy association, if descending to a lower rank, and to later times, we speak next of Pernelle, wife of Nicolas Flamel, one of these holy matrons, whose charities alone sufficed to render them historic personages. The details in her last will are very curious. Besides what was to be given to priests for masses, and to monks, and to brothers serving hospitals, who were to say vigils for her soul, she leaves money to the sick of the hospitals, to orphans, and to poor people, to pilgrims, and to young maidens. All was to be given for God; and no one was forgotten. Neither Martin, who gives the holy water at the door of St. James, her parish Church, nor the five people who are in the habit of sitting at the gate to ask alms, nor the other poor who usually sit close to the pulpit in the Church, during the sermon, nor the little boys whom she specifies by name, nor Jehannette who makes the tapers, nor her servant Gautier, nor Mengin, her young clerk for God.† Marie Felice des Ursins, duchess of Montmorency, used always to make a spiritual retreat when her husband was absent. Her charities were boundless; she gave pensions to indigent families, sums to hospitals, to prisoners, and to a number of poor confraternities. She labored to appease enmities, to stop law-suits, to gain pardon for soldiers, to convert people of vicious lives. It is recorded of her, that she could not endure to hear any one criticise a sermon, for every preacher seemed to her worthy of reverence. While in the sorrowful castle of Moulins, she would not reveal a secret which would have injured the cardinal in the king’s estimation; nor would she permit her servants to utter a word against her enemies. The princess of Epinoy continued to her last hour, to practise all the exercises of piety; and she was seized with death in the Church, at an early hour of the morning, in her sixty-first year. Maria Theresa, wife of Louis XIV., and daughter of Philippe IV. of Spain, used to make a retreat in some austere community before every great festival of the Church. Of her charities, we shall witness examples in another place, to which the foregoing details might have been referred, could we have wholly separated the justice from the mercy of Christian women, whose angelic ministry sheds such a soft light amidst the dark scenes of war, and civil commotions. Philip Villani says that the Pisan captives, when conducted to Florence, were lodged in the prisons of the

\* Acta Sanct. Ord. S. tom. II.

† Hist. Critique de Nicolas Flamel et de Pernelle sa femme, p. 297—302.



community, and were abundantly provided, by good and charitable Florentine women, with all that they wanted. During the recent persecutions of the Church the devotion of women has fully corresponded with the highest expectations which the mind, nourished with ecclesiastical traditions, could form of its efficacy. Open the pages of a Pacca, and you find that it is women who fly to present their offerings to the captive pontiff at Florence, at Lyons, and at Valence, and who press round to water his feet with their tears; observe what passes at the present day, and it is women who, as at St. Sebastian, are seen to follow the devoted monks with prayers, heroically offered up aloud for their deliverance.

During these late horrors, every Christian woman, in Spain and Portugal, as formerly in France and England, has, according to her ability, and the occasion, repeated the part of the Countess Mathilda towards the clergy, who fled to her for safety, of whom Donizo says,

“Defuit haud ulli, quin profuit optima cunctis,  
Non ab ea mœstus, si quis vir venit honestus,  
Unquam præterit, sed consolatus abivit,  
Vestibus e sacris multos hæc nota Ducatrix  
Patres Catholicos vestisse quidem reminiscor.”\*

When history and real life can furnish such pictures, it is not strange that old Romance, and the sense of the Catholic ideal, should represent women invested with the graces of angels.

No marvel that the poets of the middle age in general, should speak like Champier, who says of women,

“——celluy qui en dist blasme  
Doit estre répué infasme.”†

When these portraits of female virtues are full of an ineffable charm, still one sees that they only copy from practical living models before them. The same Champier indeed contents himself with adding, “Femmes ont des hommes pitié;” merely confirming the testimony of the Greek poet,

*Ἐχει τοι δύναμιν εἰς οἶκρον γυνή.‡*

But most commonly they dwell at length upon all their characteristic graces. That noble knight, Olivier de La Marche, in his work entitled, “Le Parement et Triomphe des dames d’honneur,” says, that he composed it for one in whom were united “humility, attention, and diligence, perseverance, firm resolve, good thoughts, loyalty, magnanimity, patience, liberality, justice, sobriety, faith, decorous dress, devout memory, charity, remorse of conscience, the fear of God, piety, a horror of evil, prudence, hope, riches of heart, nobility of understanding, acquired by the recollection of death. This,” he adds, “is the habit to triumph,

\* Vita Mathild. Lib. II. c. 2.

† Gouget Bibliotheque Française, tom. X. 136.

‡ Eurip. Iph. in Taur. 1040.

and to be well adorned at all points." He continues to explain each of these qualities, and in describing the fear of God, gives this admonition :

"Fuyons la cause qui aultruy bien empire  
C'est ung péché qui ne peult estre pire."\*

John Marot, in his *Doctrinal des Princesses et nobles Dames*, gives many instructions which express the peculiar female graces, which were then deemed essential, proving clearly how much women then differed from that allegorical personage, described by Guillaume de Lorris, in the romance of the Rose, of whom he says,

"Car quand bien peignée elle étoit  
Bien parée et bien atournée  
Elle avoit faite sa journée."

He enforces the necessity of prudence, liberality, faith, of esteeming learned persons, of using things with moderation, of avoiding idleness, of cherishing gratitude to God, of giving good examples, of not deferring good actions to the approach of death, of maintaining peace, honor, patience, and of prayer to God in spirit and in truth.† Hear what a noble man of the age of chivalry witnesseth. "I have often heard knights say, that when Messire Geoffroy used to ride through the country, when he saw the castle or manor of any lady, he used always to ask to whom it belonged, and when they would reply, it belongs to such a one, if the honor of that lady had incurred a stain, he used to go out of his way as far as half a league to get privately to the gate, which he used to mark with a little piece of chalk, and then ride away."‡ In the romances of chivalry, which are true representations of the contemporaneous society, we find the women characterized by a high and uncompromising tone of manners ; their lords had no reason to fear the trial of that magic vessel desired by the knight in Ariosto, which showed his consort's guilt to him that drank, nor their children, the waters of the overflowing Rhine, whose retributive discernment has been the theme of northern legends. When the knight Gallhalt le Brun had conquered at the tournament under the tower, and had sent to say to the beautiful lady within that it was for the love of her he had conquered, and that he prayed her to send him some gift, great or little ; the lady, who of other love besides the love of her husband, had never thought, when she heard that charge, replied to the messenger in these words, "If he hath conquered at the tournament, hath he not had recompense sufficiently high and noble in being held the best knight of all the place ? Say to him from me, that I am not a woman to render guerdon to a strange knight. I have my husband, fair and good ; he it is who is my friend and my knight ; I seek no other but him. All this you will say from me."§ In general, we are not aware of the extent of learning which was possessed by the women of the middle ages. In old

\* Id. tom. IX. 386.

† Tom. IX. 26.

‡ S Palaye Mem. sur la Chevalerie, 1. I. 174.

§ Gyron le Courtois, f. CCLXIX.

Suabian chronicles, we meet with the duchess Hedwig, in the tenth century, who, in her castle of Hohentwiel instructs her husband's nephew, Burkard, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Gall, in the Greek tongue, and in the rules of versification.\* Ekehard II. monk of St. Gall, by permission of his abbot, used to visit this castle, in order to teach her Latin, and explain Virgil to her. So learned and studious was the great countess Mathilda known to be, that the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, as well as the Roman pontiffs, used to send her their own writings. Donizo, her chaplain, says, that she equalled bishops in application.

“Nullus ea Præsul studiosior invenietur.  
Copia librorum non deficit huicve bonorum,  
Libros ex cunctis habet artibus atque figuris.  
Immemor est nunquam servare statuta secunda.”†

No accomplishments of erudition, however, were found to spoil the mild graces, or weaken the religious sentiment of these daughters of faith, to each of whom might be applied Lear's description of Cordelia,

“Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle and low ; an excellent thing in woman.”

Mary Cajétane Agnesi, after distinguishing herself among mathematicians, chose to hide her literary glories in retreat, devoting herself to the assistance of the infirm and aged poor, in the hospital Trivulzi, at Milan, in which she died. Anne of Brittany, the idol of her country, and the wonder of her age, skilled in astronomy, Greek and Latin, as well as any clerk in her duchy, was another memorable example. In her book of hours she is represented on her knees in prayers, her two daughters standing behind her, and her patron, St. Anne, on her left hand. Celebrated in the domestic histories of Padua was Eleonora Maltraversa, the wife of Papafava Carrara, mother of an illustrious line, and possessed of such wisdom and rare qualities of mind, that noblemen came from all parts of Italy to consult her as an oracle whom they used to find administering medicines to the poor.‡ Who can enter the solemn halls of Padua without being reminded of Helena Piscopia Cornaro, that fair, illustrious and holy woman, clad in the habit of St. Benedict, who possessed a perfect knowledge of the Spanish, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic languages, who was a poet, a theologian, an astronomer, and who was admitted doctor in philosophy in that university ? It was in obedience to the will of her father, in whose house she resided, though always wearing the monastic habit, that she consented to this act, which, by its publicity and singularity wounded her exquisite sense of what belonged to the retiring modesty of her sex. “All ordinary kinds of glory have been reaped by our family,” said her father, “nothing remains but this surpassing honor which shall be ours on your compliance.”

\* Ekehard in Cas. c. 10.

† Vita Mathild. Liv. II. c. 20.

‡ Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ.



"I obey you," said the saintly daughter, "but I feel that it is making the sacrifice of my life." She only requested as a condition, that the pulpit from which she was to hold forth might be transferred from the hall of the university to our Lady's chapel in the great church. Thither she passed through the learned assembly, which was composed of celebrated men, who had flocked from distant parts of Italy to behold a scene so extraordinary. After accomplishing the exercises to the delight and astonishment of all present, and having received the laurel crown, she hastily withdrew, to escape the applause and admiration of the crowd, but her prophetic words were soon verified. The interior agitation brought on fever, and almost immediately it was perceived that she could not survive the shock. It was in her last moments that the intelligence was received of the defeat of the Turks, and the deliverance of Christendom; but it was too late, or rather joy completed what humility had begun. She expired in a transport of pious gratitude, praising in sublime ejaculations the victorious Christ, and resigning into his hands that chaste, angelic spirit which had fled from its frail tenement through shame at receiving honors which seemed due to him alone. The author of the book entitled on the use of romances, amongst other charges against history, complains that women hardly appear in it. But surely in whatever sense we understand history, the accusation is ungrounded. The virtues of the countess Mathilda were not consigned to the silence that Pericles prescribed, for both in life and death, her fame sounded to the ends of the world. Hear Donizo.

"Sunt ubique boni fuerant sibi maxime noti,  
 Nam qui trans Pontum, seu Gallicie remorantur,  
 Christo jure preces, ex ipsa fundere sæpe  
 Curabant, missos, sibi mittebantque benignos."\*

The spirit of chivalry, as well as the customs and legislation of the feudal age, gave even a political importance to women, which sometimes, perhaps, caused them to occupy a station in society, and to fulfil duties, for which they were neither generally qualified by nature, nor designed by the grace which had delivered them.

One old writer styles the countess Mathilda "a military woman;" nevertheless their conduct during the middle ages, in this unfavorable and ambiguous position, constitutes a true miracle of history, of which this very instance is perhaps the most memorable. What a union of virtues in that venerable woman, the empress Agnes, who assumed the reins of government on the death of the emperor, Henry III., his son Henry being only five years old, and held them during five years, displaying consummate prudence, and singular industry,† endeavoring to keep off the gathering storm, and to preserve peace and order, governing with the greatest wisdom, strength, and justice.‡ This was she to whom the great instructor of the desert, Peter Damian, writes in terms of such praise, after beholding her entry into Rome. "You have come humble to the humble, poor to the poor,

\* Vita ejus, Lib. II. c. 20.

† Chronic. Hirsaug.

‡ Voigt. Hildebrand, p. 41.

as if along with rude shepherds and the rustic throng, to adore the child crying in the manger. Truly to see you then, and those that were with you, was a wondrous spectacle, an example most edifying of the imitation of the Saviour. You had laid aside the insignia of imperial grandeur; you appeared as a lowly penitent; you chose the sufferings of a mortified condition. On seeing you arrive thus, with Hermisinde, your relation, the widow of William, Count of Poitiers, it seemed as if Mary Magdalen came with the other Mary to the sepulchre, not indeed to seek the living among the dead, but to adore the vestiges of him that was risen." Altruda, of the noble and powerful Roman family of Frangipani, the wife of Rainerius, Count of Berthenora, came at the head of a military force which she joined with that of William Marchesalla, of Ferrara, to relieve Ancona, in the year 1172, when it was besieged by Christian of Mayence, arch-chancellor of the emperor, Frederic the First. She is described by Romuald of Salerno, and Andrea Dandolo, in their chronicles, and by Boncampagno, the Florentine, in his book on the siege of Ancona. The latter says, that "in beauty this noble lady shone amongst those who attended on her as the morning star amidst the others, at the hour of prime." She tells the people of Ancona that after her husband's death, although oppressed with sorrow, she has governed his domains without contradiction. We find, in fact, that she makes great donations to the monks of Camaldoli, for the soul of her husband. She tells the citizens that on hearing of their distress and peril, she has left her castles, towns, and possessions, and has hastened to their succor, leading at her side her only son, a minor, who, though but a boy, being mindful of his father's magnanimity, was inflamed with zeal to come to the assistance and protection of friends.\* Who does not recur with delight to what he may have read in old Norman history of that beautiful and wise countess, Sybille, the wife of duke Robert, of whom William of Jumièges says, that "in the absence of the duke, she used to direct the public and private affairs of the province better than the duke would have done if he had been present."† While Robert de Culei, surnamed Burdet, was absent in Italy, his wife, Sybille, daughter of William of Caprea, defended Tarragona. She had no less courage than beauty. During her husband's absence she was full of vigilance. Every night she armed herself with a cuirass like a knight, mounted on the walls, made the tour of the place, and kept the sentinels awake. "What praise," cries Orderic Vitalis, "is due to a young lady who thus serves her husband with faith, by an attentive affection, and who piously governs the people of God with ability and vigilance."‡

In the cathedral of Lucca, on the tomb of Berta, wife of the marquis Adelbert, of Lucca, who died in 925, you may read these lines among others in her praise :

"Quæ specie speciosa ; bono speciosior actu  
Filia Lotharii pulchrior ex meritis.

\* Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XXX. † Hist. du Normand. Liv. VIII. 14. ‡ Hist. Nor. Lib. XIII.

Concilio docto moderabat regmina multa  
Semper erat secum gratia magna Dei.”\*

An earlier and perhaps still more beautiful example, was that of St. Bathilda, to whose mild and gracious manners I before alluded, who deserved to be entrusted with that portion of her husband's authority which regarded the protection of the churches, and the consolation of the poor. Charged with the regency on his death, she enfranchised the serfs; but as soon as her son Clotaire III. was of age to reign she hastened to gratify her love of holy retirement, and withdrew to the monastery of Chêlles, which she had founded, and where she lived as a simple nun, devoted to works of piety and charity to the poor, in which house she died in the year 680. Beatrix the great duchess of Tuscany, so often praised by St. Peter Damian, was so highly and universally venerated, that cities contended for her tomb. Muratori transmits the verses of Donizo,† in which he expresses his regret that such a celebrated and holy lady should have her sepulchre in Pisa, an emporium of the East, which hears the perjuries, of Pagans, Turks, Africans, and Parthians, who trade there, and which thus contains so many facilities for crime, instead of being entombed in Canossa, which was an eminent city in those days for religion and purity of manners.‡ What would the ancients have thought of this contention for a woman's grave? Above all, how admirable appears the union of female justice in the middle ages with princely power, in the person of her illustrious daughter, the countess Mathilda? “When the whole world,” as Donizo says, with a poetic licence, “was infected with the leprosy of schism, it was a woman in Italy who remained constant to Christ, in the person of Gregory his vicar.

“ ‘Munda domus sola Mathildis erat spaciosa  
Catholicis prorsus fuit hæc tutus quasi portus;  
Nam quos damnabat rex, pellebat, spoliabat  
Pontifices, monachos, clericos, Italos quoque Gallos  
Ad vivum fontem currebant funditus omnes  
Scilicet ad dictam Dominam jam mente benignam  
Quæque requirebant apud ipsam repperiebant.’ ”

Her justice deterred the enemies of the Church, who sought to plunder it, and her death will be the signal for letting them loose.

“ Stabant O quanti crudeles atque tyranni  
Sub specie justa, noscentes te fore justam:  
Qui dissolvuntur, jam pacis fœdera rumpunt  
Ecclesias spoliant, nunc nemo vindicat ipsas.”§

The lady of old feudal times has ever been fit argument of the poet's strain; witness that of the Last Minstrel, where it presents the lady of Branksome appearing on the castle wall, to answer the summons of the English lords who come to de-

\* Italia Sadra, I. 802.

† Rer. Italic. Script. tom. V. Vita Mathild. Lib. I. c. 2

‡ Annal. Camaldul. Lib. XX.

§ Vita Mathild, Lib. II. c. 2. and 20.



mand the person of Sir William of Deloraine, leading before her eyes her little son, their captive, to whom she makes that grand reply,

“For the young heir of Branksome’s line,  
God be his aid, and God be mine !  
Through me no friend shall meet his doom,  
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.”

At the moment when Sobieski mounted his horse to hasten to the relief of Vienna, during the memorable siege of 1683, when the Turks threatened to conquer this bulwark of Christendom, the queen, holding in her arms the youngest of their children, embraced him, and wept. “What reason have you to weep, madam ?” said the king. “I weep,” she replied, “because this child is not in a condition to follow you like the rest.” Truly when it was a question of defending the holy state of Christendom, or of maintaining justice in the absence of law, in defence of the meek and the oppressed, the high, chivalrous sentiments of nature may have been allowed free scope, and the ideal of Plato’s chivalry realized, without incurring the censure of the calm Eternal Wisdom. Such words as those of Clare to Wilton, must then have had a noble import :

“Go then to fight ! Clare bids thee go !  
Clare can a warrior’s feelings know,  
And weep a warrior’s sigh ;  
Can Red Earl Gilbert’s spirit feel,  
Buckle the spur upon thy heel,  
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,  
And send thee forth to die !”

Not, therefore, in the light of an isolated and wholly unprecedented fact, stands in history the heroism of the Maid of Orleans, of which Pasquier says, that, for his part, he regards it as a true miracle of God, an opinion which in our age of criticism, has been supported by the eloquent pen of Goerres.\* Nothing was more in harmony with the spirit of those times, than the spotless purity of her manners in the midst of an army, the ardor with which she resolved to contend for justice, the prowess of her deeds in its support, the wise simplicity of her answers, and the voluntary offering and sacrifice of herself to a cause which she believed to interest heaven. Pasquier alludes to another memorable example of a woman heroically constant in fidelity to the cause of truth and justice. “The history of the constable of St. Pol,” says he, “has filled my soul with despite and compassion. With similar effects have I reviewed the tragic history of the Duke of Bourbon ; but now that I come to Mary, queen of Scotland, ( and remember what means of information he possessed respecting her, ) I seem to have only tears.”† Petrarch, in truth, made an unjust restriction, when, in allusion to the two sisters of the Cardinal Colonna, he speaks of the distinguished virtue of the

\* Die Jungfrau von Orleans.

† Recherches de la France, Liv. VI. 15.

Roman women in general, and says, "It is with reason that they are renowned above their sex; for they have the tenderness and modesty of women, with the courage and constancy of men." What else was this but the ideal of the Christian women realized in all Catholic countries during ages of faith?

Ferdinand, son of King Alphonso, was saved by his wife Isabella, when he had been defeated, and in danger of losing his kingdom. This courageous princess went secretly, disguised as a Capuchin, to find her uncle, the Prince of Tarentum, who was the most formidable of the enemies of her husband, and throwing herself at his feet, appeased him. But here we must distinguish, as the schoolmen say. All the ideas of the middle ages tended to inspire men with aversion for such kind of solicitude as that of the Countess de Penthievre, who made her virtuous husband, Charles of Blois, promise, on leaving Nantes, before the battle of Aurai, in which he lost his life, that he would consent to no accommodation with John de Montfort; and on the other hand, with love and admiration for that evinced by Jane of Navarre, who, on hearing that her husband, the duke of Brittany, through indignation at the articles proposed by the King of France, had resolved, in despite of danger, on arresting his ambassadors, took up their children in her arms and threw herself on her knees before him, to entreat that he would suffer his wrath to cool, and never rose from the ground, till she had persuaded him to revoke the order.\*

These, however, are rare occasions calling forth heroic and extraordinary efforts. It suits our object better to mark the consequences of the thirst for justice, in the fulfilment of the more common duties of those whom nature had designed for the consolation and instruction of domestic life. "Happy the man," cries a French poet, "to whom God grants a holy mother!" Happy the ages, then, of which I attempt the history, which were accustomed to behold multiplied the maternal image in all the sweetness, strength, and perfection to which faith had exalted nature.

The venerable abbot whom you are about to hear, reader, is the celebrated Guibert de Nogent, who was born in the year 1053, in the castle of Beauvaisis, and when you have heard him describe his mother, you will know in general what was the maternal character during the middle ages. "God of mercy and of sanctity, I render thanks to thee for all thy benefits. At first, I thank thee for having granted me a beautiful, chaste, and modest mother, who was infinitely filled with the fear of thy name. As for her beauty, it is not altogether vain to speak of it. If Sallust had not thought that beauty alone, without morals, might be praised, he would not have said of Aurelia Orestilla that in her, besides beauty, there was nothing good to praise. And, indeed, although an image in relation to faith is said by the apostle to be nothing, nevertheless that apt conformation of members is not undeserving of reasonable praise; for, although momentaneous beauty is mutable by the instability of blood, as every

\* Lobineau Hist. de Bret. VIII.

thing else of imaginary good, yet it cannot be denied to be good ; for whatever is eternally instituted by God is beautiful, and whatever is temporally beautiful, is only as it were a mirror of that eternal beauty which has been witnessed when angels have appeared to men, and which will be seen in the bodies of the elect, when they are made conformable to the brightness of Christ in his transfiguration. I render thee thanks, O God, for having added to her beauty virtue. Thou knowest how thou didst impress her with the fear of thy name, which she found a remedy against all mental diseases ; how she loved domestic retirement, and how careful she was not to condemn others who went much from home ; and when, by strangers or servants, any fables of this kind were related, how she used to turn away, and endeavor by whispers to put a stop to them, being as much afflicted as if it were her own character that was called in question. The virtuous looks of my mother, the fewness of her words, and her constant tranquillity of countenance, were not made to embolden the lightness of those who saw her. It was far less from experience than from a kind of terror with which she was inspired from on high, that she learned to detest sin ; she used often to tell me that she had so penetrated her soul with the dread of a sudden death, that on coming to a more advanced age, she bitterly regretted that she no longer felt in her aged heart those same agitations of pious terror which she had felt in an age of simplicity and ignorance. In the eighth month after my birth, my father, according to the flesh, passed away. Although my mother was then in the brilliant lustre of her beauty, she resolved to remain a widow. What great examples of modesty did she then give ! Living in an extreme fear of the Lord, and with an equal love for her neighbors, especially those who were poor, she governed us and our goods prudently. Her mouth was so accustomed to recall without ceasing the name of her deceased husband, that it seemed as if her soul had never any other thought ; for whether in praying, or in distributing alms, or even in the most ordinary acts of life, she continually used to pronounce the name of this man, which showed that her mind was always occupied with him. She offered daily sacrifices for his soul, and gave great alms, and she often beheld him in visions, which, as they did not inspire her with any security, but merely excited her solicitude, must no doubt have come from God, and from those angels who have care of the dead. She was assiduous in repairing to the churches, being never on the common occasions absent from the nocturnal offices. At her own expense, she maintained, with humble faith, a lamp perpetually burning in the church of St. Ledger. She learned the seven penitential psalms by heart, not by reading, but by hearing them. She was universally venerated, and being much visited by noble men and women, on account of her amiable and gracious conversation, she used, when they went away, to have great scruples less she should have uttered any less true or idle word. Thou knowest, O God, with what purity and holiness she brought me up, not sparing even to clothe my little body in the pomp of raiment, that I might seem to equal courtly or royal boys. Neither sleeping nor waking, did her solicitude



for me ever cease. At length, on St. Gregory's day, she sent me to school to learn grammar, from a man who could not, indeed, teach me what he did not know himself, but from one who was most careful to preserve me in virtue. For with whatever was modest, with whatever was chaste, with whatever was part of exterior elegance, he most faithfully and lovingly imbued me. In after years, when I was elected abbot, thou knowest, O God, how much she was afflicted ; for what others deemed a source of honor, was to her matter of intolerable grief ; because she did not wish me to be exposed so young to so many dangers, especially knowing that I was ignorant of forensic things, having devoted myself exclusively to letters. One would have thought that the admonitions which she gave me on this occasion, and her predictions also, must have come, not from an illiterate woman, but from a most learned bishop. When my mother at length was seized with her last illness, both my brother and I were absent at Nogent : God spared her tenderness and ordered all for the best. When my old master, who had assumed the religious habit, weeping stood by her death-bed, and said, 'Lo your sons are far away, and perchance you are grieved that you should die during their absence ;' she replied, looking on him fixedly, 'Had they even remained within the adjacent cloister, God knows that I wish neither them nor any other of my relations to be present at my death. There is only One, whom with all my strength I worship ; only One whose presence I desire now.' The same night she departed not ungratefully, as we believe, to the embraces of her God."\*

Happy ages, when God gave men holy mothers. Happy the man in modern times who has not occasion to seek for them in the chronicles of the past. "There sleep," says a poet in our days, speaking of his mother's grave ; "sixty years devoted to one single thought,—of a life past in doing good ; of innocence, of love, of hope, of purity. What aspirations towards her God ! what faith in death, what virtues in earnest of immortality ! How many sleepless nights spent in alleviating pain ! How many pleasures renounced in order to assist poverty ! How many tears, at all times ready to flow and mingle with the tears of others ; how many sighs after another country ; and how much patience to endure a life of which the crown was elsewhere ?" This was the mother of the middle ages ; on beholding which I feel a tear spring up by pious memory waked, though time steals even sorrows from the heart, doubtless because they were sweeter than any joy. Cold judgment and the sense of goodness are all that remain, where it was once thought that impassioned love and devoted tenderness must have been eternal.

If you would seek other examples from the same history, your search need not be long. There you will behold the illustrious and pious matron Willa, mother of Theobald, who renounces all the consolations of home and country, and flies to the desert of Salonica, on the first tidings of her long-lost son having been discovered there under a hermit's cowl, and there she serves God with him till death

\* Guiberti Abb. de Novigento de Vita propria, Lib. I. 11.

makes the separation.\* There you will see Muriel, the first wife of Tancred de Hauteville, who, says the old chronicle, was beautiful, strictly virtuous, and in conversation most holy; worthy of perpetual memory, and wondrously praised and extolled by all men. There you will see Frascade, too, his second wife, who made no distinctions in her love between her own children and those of the former marriage; so that it was impossible to discover by her manner which were her own.

During the middle ages, it was often necessary to find an apology rather for the abundance of maternal affection, than for its absence; and yet the passage of St. Ambrose, to which holy men had recourse on these occasions, must have been the more satisfactory, as it held up to them so faithful a mirror, in which they could discern how the spirit and manners which prevailed around them were often superior to the type of nature. "Consider," says the holy bishop, "what the mother of Zebedee's children sought with and for her sons. It is a mother solicitous for the honor of her sons, of whose vows indeed the measure is immoderate, and yet it should be pardoned; it is a mother far advanced in age, studiously religious, destitute of consolation; arrived at that stage when she ought to be assisted or nourished by her offspring, and yet she suffers them to be absent from her, and prefers to her own pleasure that they should deserve the recompense of having followed Christ; for at the first word of the Lord calling them, they had left their nets and followed him. Moved, therefore, by the indulgence of maternal affection, she besought the Saviour, saying, 'Grant that my sons may sit the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left in thy kingdom.' Although it was an error, yet it was an error of piety; for the bowels of a mother are strangers to patience, and although greedy in vows, yet the cupidity is pardonable which is not greedy of money but of grace; nor is it a shameless petition which consults not for herself but for her children. Consider the mother, think upon the mother. Christ considered the love of the mother, whose old age was consoled by the recompense of the sons, which though wearied by maternal desires, endured the absence of the dearest pledges. Consider also the woman, that is, the weaker sex, whom the Lord had not as yet confirmed by his own passion. Consider, I say, the heir of that first woman Eve, who was transfused into all, sinking under the weight of immoderate cupidity, whom the Lord had not as yet redeemed with his own blood, nor as yet delivered by his death from the long-accustomed affections and appetite of power. The woman, therefore, failed in following an hereditary error."

The Christian manners, in regard to young women, prescribed the reverse of what was required by the customs of Sparta. It appears from St. Chrysostom, that before marriage, women lived in retreat. "How," he asks, "can a man know beforehand, the character and defects of the woman that he is to marry, since till

\* Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. XVII.

† Liv. V. fide de cap. 2.

that moment, custom requires that she should live in retreat, and in the habit of restraining herself.”\* During the middle ages, the same discipline prevailed, and Rubichan observes, that even in modern times, these young pensioners from convents have been led to the altar in preference to others who had been taught by their ostentatious education, to assume the forms of a Greek statue, when accompanying themselves on the harp, and to fix a date of chronology, with the skill of an academician.

Yet, in the women of the middle ages, was not wanting the spirit which had been the admiration of antiquity; nor when occasions required, the corresponding deed which had been immortalized in the poetry of Greece. There were still Antigonas, though there were not as yet, Belindas. William Campisamperio of Padua, after spending his first year in prison, on his escape, took arms against the tyrant Eccelino, from whose cruel yoke he sought to free his country. But being betrayed by Alberico, who had only pretended to be the tyrant's foe, he was again cast into prison, and finally beheaded in the public square at Padua, where, by order of Eccelino, his body was left on the ground to be devoured by dogs. That night, however, while no man durst remove it, all his relations and friends being proscribed, came Daria, the beautiful daughter of Count Albert of Baone, with the daughter of Gerard de Campisamperio, and some other ladies, who taking it up, carried it to the Basilica of St. Antonio, and there, with lighted tapers, and as much solemn rite as was consistent with secrecy and despatch, placed it in a holy grave.†

St. Jerome says, that a daughter should not go to the Basilicas of the martyrs unless in company with her mother.‡ In this respect, during the ages of faith, we are again presented with the manners of the old poetic world, for of the feminine boldness which belongs to a certain style of education in later times, we find no trace in Homer. When all the companions of Nausicaa fled on the approach of Ulysses, the poet expresses the modesty of Nausicaa by saying, that she remained because Minerva had filled her mind with courage.§ At present, perhaps, on such an occasion the instruction of a goddess would not be required.

It must not be inferred, however, that the meek daughters of the Catholic discipline in the middle ages, were deficient in graces, corresponding to the charms with which they had been endowed by nature.

At no time is there any thing wholly isolated or solitary in morals or genius; and, therefore, we may infer much respecting the character of noble women of the middle ages, from beholding the portrait of that Laura, whom the verses of Petrarch have immortalized. Her piety in days of youthful joy, rising to matins, and leaving her chamber only for the Church, her union of beauty and sanctity, her calm resignation in sorrow, the justice and grace which marked all her ways,

\* Tractat. de Virginitate.

† Epist. LVII.

‡ Bernardini Scardionii Hist. Patavinæ, Lib. III. 12.

§ Od. VI. 139.



"Her words," says Petrarch, "had the dignity of nature, and her voice was a source of continual enchantment; soft, angelic, and divine, it could appease the wrath, dissipate the clouds, and calm the tempests of the soul," her firmness of purpose, and strength of judgment, when to show her sense of a breach of honor, she left marks of it in her will, in reference to a child who had offended, her modesty and humility, never being puffed up with vanity from her birth, her beauty, or the celebrity she derived from the praises of Petrarch, whom she only sought to lead to heaven by a life of grace!—all these were more than the features of an individual; for they were characteristics of whole generations. Did any one wish to learn in what exactly consisted the becoming? He was referred for instruction to noble women; that soft and susceptible race, possessed intuitively with exquisite acuteness, the secret of all justice. The simple infantine and joyous air of the maidens of the middle ages, is still witnessed, we are told, in those of Spain, whose charms and graces from being without any mixture of what in France and England is termed education, are said to inspire an unwonted and supreme delight,\* as those who have only seen artificial beds of flowers, are enraptured on discovering the wild blossom of the mountains, or the bright, exquisite gem which sparkles on the dark green borders of the sleepless stream. The women of the middle ages sought no power to charm from Tarentine robe, which was a term of reproach even among Gentiles. Byron is struck with somewhat of reverence, as well as delight, at the dress of the Spanish women, when he makes that admirable remark respecting the air of mysticism, and of gaiety, which belongs to them; and whoever has beheld those beautiful white forms, kneeling like the women of Genoa in churches, veiled, will have no difficulty in conceiving his emotions.

General simplicity in dress was found compatible with occasional magnificence, as the old poet said of the Dame de Fayel:

"La Dames' est tost acesmée,  
Car belle dame est tost paëre."

The air of hardy plainness which reigned in all private relations, agreed well with beauty. The daughters of those times had no zone that caught the eye more than the person did, no frontlets as if one wished to deck the sun with jewels. In church, and in all honorable places, women generally appeared wrapped up in white folds, over which was thrown a long black mantle.† It is thus we find them represented in old glass windows, and miniatures; and the habit of some orders of nuns is only the same which has remained unchanged. The duties, even the recreations of women, were humble and private. It was, as with the Greeks, in the time of Æschylus, when no woman ever went to the theatre, though a foolish tale passed current in later times, respecting their terror on the entrance

\* Huber Skizzen aus Spanien, p. 40.    † Ildefons. von Arx Geschichten des St. Gallen.

of the chorus of furies in the Eumenides. Innocent delight and duty went hand in hand, in sweet conformity with the design of nature.

The discipline which Cicero ascribes to all cities but Sparta, by which women were confined within the shade of walls, and rendered incapable of any active exercise by the softness of their habits, did not prevail in the middle ages. Those who, like Nausicaa, had brothers in the bloom of youth, who always wished to have fresh washed clothes going to the chorus, were led sometimes by the employments that devolved upon them to the margin of rivers and fountains, where the fragrant air, and the lovely aspect of groves and meadows, supplied refreshment, and the pleasure most congenial to innocence. Spinning was another occupation belonging to all women of the middle ages. Shepherdesses spun at cottage doors, listening to romantic tales; the daughters of citizens spun in their court yards, while some old relative read aloud from a spiritual book; princesses spun on the balconies of palaces, listening to the music of instruments, or the song of the minstrel; nuns spun after matins, seated under the arcades of their cloister. The holy queen Adelaide, mother of king Robert, used to take a pride in working with her own hands, in embroidering, for the ornaments of churches. Every church and monastery in the middle ages could boast of some delicate work which attested the ingenious skill as well as piety, of the maidens and matrons of the adjoining manor. Upon opening in the abbey of St. Denis, the tomb of Jean de Bourbon, wife of king Charles V., there were found the remains of a crown, a gold ring, and a spindle or distaff of wood gilt, half decayed, the symbol of domestic occupations. Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsal, relates, that "the women of the North, in point of execution, though perhaps not in the choice of a subject, excelled even the Roman artists in the work of tapestry; for that even illustrious women, in order to avoid idleness, used to exercise a subtle skill in making as it were hereditary ornaments for their houses."\* The husband, indeed, as in the days of Æschylus, was what Minerva calls the eye of the house, *δωμάτων ἐπίσκοπον*.† Rarely in the middle ages could any man ascribe his everlasting doom, like Rusticucci, if we credit Dante, to the savage temper which rebelled against his just domestic sway. "Nevertheless," as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, "the ring was given to the spouse as a symbol of domestic custody and administration, that she should seal up the things that were in the house."‡ The husband was not absorbed in domestic engagements; he had still generosity for his friend, and heroism for the cause of justice. There are few Anthonios in cities that have advanced in the manners of modern civilization, though there may be a sufficient number of Shylocks. Accordingly we find that heroic love entered generally into the marriages of the middle ages. Even in the romances of chivalry, the knights are continually speaking, in their perilous passages, like Turnus to his friends in the moment of danger—

\* Olai Magni gentium Septent. Hist. Lib. XIII. c. 9.

† Eumenid. 740.

‡ Clem. Alex. Pedag. Lib. III. c. 2.

——— "Nunc conjugis esto  
 Quisque suæ tectique memor: nunc magna referto  
 Facta patrum laudesque."\*

The spirit which presided over marriages in the middle age was not mercenary nor political, nor choked with ambition of the meaner sort. The maxim of the Pythagoreans, "to avoid a woman who had gold on her person,"† seemed to prevail in all its force. Down to the fourteenth century, in France the dowry of women was a chaplet of roses; the fortune of men was their worth, their heroism, their spotless honor, or even their learning and wisdom. A dowry was no more essential during the middle ages than it was in Homeric times, when a daughter for being beautiful and expert and prudent, might reckon upon gaining for her husband the best man in wide Troy. "Hippodameia," says Homer, "was beloved by her father and mother above all their daughters:—"

——— πᾶσαν γὰρ ὀμηλικὴν ἐκέκαστο  
 κάλλει καὶ ἄρνοισιν ἰδὲ φρεσὶ τοῦνεκα καὶ μιν  
 γῆμεν ἀνὴρ ὤριστος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ.‡

Giroie, sprung from the two noble families of the Franes and Bretons, to whom duke Richard had given the two castles in Normandy, of Montreuil and of Echanfour, while on his journey to find the duke, was received and lodged in the house of Toustain de Montfort, and having merely seen by chance at dinner Gisele, the daughter of that knight, without any inquiry he demanded her in marriage from her illustrious parents, and obtained her for his wife.§ Such disregard was shown to the interest arising from family connections, that we find the German nobles of the tenth century censured by the fourth Ekehard, Abbot of St. Gaul, for choosing wives out of Italy and Greece, to the neglect of the German daughters.|| "Virtue is all the dowry that you need leave your daughter," says Marcellus Ficinus to Berlingherio.¶ In the fifteenth century, we find the preachers of Italy laying great stress upon observing the ancient simplicity in relation to marriages. Bernardine of Monte Felto preaching at Tuderta, on the manner of the Christian life, showed the necessity of moderating the dower of daughters, and of renouncing great expenses in the celebration of nuptials.\*\* Moreover, we find that the great importance of attending to spiritual or intellectual interests in the formation of alliances, was not overlooked. Stephen, King of Hungary, sought Gisile, daughter to the emperor Henry, in marriage, but he could not obtain her father's consent till he had embraced the Christian religion. This was the Stephen who, once converted, turned himself to Christ with all his heart, and became a mirror of all sanctity.†† The traditions of the first ages had per-

\* X. 280.

† Jamblich de Pythagoric vita, cap. 18.

‡ II. XIII. 431.

§ William of Jumièges Hist. du Normand. Lib. VII. c. 11. || Ekehard in Lib. Bened. 122.

¶ Epist. Lib. VII.

\*\* Wadd. Ann. Minorum, tom. XIV.

†† Annal Hirsaugiensis.



petuated the spirit of the primitive Christians in this respect even when the occasion for some of these precautions had ceased. The dangers resulting to the Christian woman who should become the wife of a Pagan, are bitterly lamented by St. Cyprian and Tertullian; the latter says, "The husband wishes to go to the bath, the wife wishes to observe the station; the husband gives a banquet, the wife is obliged to fast; and there is never so much to do in the house as when the wife wishes to go to the church. What Pagan," he asks, "would wish to permit his wife to go about through the villages, to enter strange houses, to visit the brethren, that is, the sick and the poor? Who would wish to permit them to carry water to wash their feet, provisions and drink to offer them? There are times of persecution too, and who would consent that his wife should visit in secret the prisons in order to kiss the chains of the martyrs?" Then again what new difficulties when Christian daughters were born to the Pagan husband, and Christian sisters to Pagan brothers; for in these mixed marriages, the daughters almost always followed the religion of the mother.

Victoria of Abitina, a city near Carthage, made a vow of perpetual chastity, because her father wished to oblige her to marry a Pagan. Then what trials awaited the female slaves who embraced Christianity; what dangers from their masters, and the sons of their masters! When these masters hated Christianity, what a life of misery was theirs! Thus the master of St. Potamienne of Alexandria, being unable to seduce her, denounced her as a Christian to the proconsul Aquila, who condemned her to a cruel punishment. Pagan slaves could find shelter from the fury of their masters in the Pagan temples, but it is evident that Christians could not avail themselves of this resource. The council of Elvira in 305, declares that "the number of young persons who may remain unmarried, cannot excuse those parents who cause Christian virgins to contract a marriage with idolaters." Still there were many such marriages. These Christian women were not excluded from the Church, but the Church did not bless their union with the Pagans, which was but a civil marriage. In short, Christian women, in primitive times, suffered in their pagan homes what many pious Catholic women of the later ages endured when placed in houses, which, if not Pagan in profession, are such in fact: dependant upon fathers, brothers, husbands, and masters, who either do not profess their faith, or what is perhaps worse, as in France, have contracted a hatred for the very religion which they are supposed to profess.\* Now it is true, that such occasions for constancy did but very seldom and partially exist during the middle ages, when all the world was united in one religion, and when Christian manners were defended against the few by the force of public opinion. Still whenever occasion did arise, we find that due attention was paid to the intellectual and moral interests in all the relations of domestic life. The master of the sentences express-

\* Frederick Munter. *Die Christen im heidnischen Hause*. Copenhagen. 1828.

ly teaches and shows from the holy fathers, that a marriage ought never to be contracted between those who are of different religions.\*

"In choosing a husband," says St. Isidore, "four things are generally regarded, virtue, race, beauty, and wisdom; but of these wisdom is the most effectual to cause love. Thus Didó loved Æneas for his beauty,

for his virtue,                   'Quem sese ore ferens;'  
  'Quam forti pectore et armis;'

for his wisdom of discourse,

                                  —'Heu quibus ille  
for his race,                   Jactatus fatis, quæ bella exhausta canebat;'

'Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum.' "†

Certainly there are not wanting examples in ancient history to show that it was the philosophy, the poetic or literary fame, rather than the beauty of the youth which won the maiden's heart,—that intellectual enjoyments entered into the idea of love's qualifications, and that the loves of the middle ages resembled those of which the poet sung,

*τῇ σοφίᾳ παρέδρους  
παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνέργους.‡*

Hence we find Marsilius Ficinus telling his young friend, the poet Antonio Pelocta, that marriage will be no impediment to his study of letters, if he lives temperately, and economizes his time.§ The husband of the middle ages in fact was looked up to, according to apostolic prescriptions, as the instructor of the house; he was not the husband of the civilization which some modern sophists advocate. He rather resembled the son of Abraham, who introduced the woman that he loved into the tabernacle of Sara, his mother, and took her to be his wife, and so loved her, "ut dolorem, qui ex morte matris ejus acciderat, temperaret."||

Here my discourse might recall the song which Dante heard in the region where spirits are made pure, that

"Many a pair extoll'd,  
Who lived in virtue chastely, and the bonds  
Of wedded love."¶

Roger, king of Sicily, was reduced to such a state of bitter affliction on the death of his wife Alberia, that for a long time he shut himself up in his private rooms, and would see no one but his familiar servants, so that it became the general opinion of men, both far and near, that he had died, and some nobles made an insurrection; and whoever affirmed that he was still alive was laughed at.\*\*

\* Sentent. Lib. IV. distinct 39.   † Isidori Etymolog. Lib. IX. c. 8.   ‡ Eurip. Med. 841.

§ Marsil. Ficini Epist. Lib. IV.

|| Genes. xxiv. 67.

¶ Purg. XXV.

\*\* Alexand. Abbat. de reb. gestis Rogerii, Lib. III. c. 1. Rer. Italic. Scriptor. tom. V.

We cannot enter any of our ancient cathedral or monastic churches, without meeting some monument proclaiming, in terms more or less beautiful, the tenderness and constancy of the same affection during the middle ages. The love of the celebrated Balthazar Castiglione for his wife, is thus expressed in the inscription which he caused to be placed upon her tomb, in the church of S. Maria delle Grazie, near Mantua :

“Non ego nunc vivo, conjux dulcissima ; vitam  
Corpore namque tuo fata meam abstulerunt ;  
Sed vivam, tumulto cum tecum condar in isto,  
Jungenturque tuis ossibus ossa mea.”

I have recorded the affection of men ; but what shall I say of the woman's love ? Blanca Rubea, of Padua, having fallen into the hands of the tyrant Eccelino, when the fortress was taken, in defending which her husband had been slain, sought to escape by throwing herself from a window, but was reserved to give an example to all future ages of heroic perseverance ; for when his crime was consummated, after all attempts to corrupt her mind had failed, dissembling her grief, she demanded permission to view once more the remains of her husband ; and entering the sepulchre, where bloody and yet but green in earth he lay festering in his shroud, she resolved, as if unsubstantial death were amorous, and that the lean, abhorred monster kept him there in dark to be her paramour, to stay with him, and never from that place of dim night depart again. Bidding her eyes to look their last, she cast herself with such force upon the corpse, now half dissolved upon the cold stone, that her arms took their last embrace, and with a kiss she died.\*

Veronica da Gambera, a poetess and patroness of learning, daughter of Count Gian-Francesco Gambera, was married to Gilberto, the tenth lord of Corregio, whom she lost nine years after their marriage, when she was scarcely thirty-three years of age. She caused to be engraven on the door of her apartment these beautiful lines :

“Ille meos primus qui me sibi junxit amores  
Abstulit, ille habeat secum servetque sepulcro.”

Orlandini, gonfalonier of justice at Florence, meditated deadly vengeance against Balbaccio, a brave warrior of the republic, for having expressed indignation at his cowardice in flying from Marradi on the invasion of Piccinnino. The gonfalonier concealed the assassins in his chamber, where Balbaccio came every day to receive his orders. Orlandini conversing familiarly, walked with him to the fatal spot at the end of the room, then gave the signal, when the assassins rushed out and despatched him. His body was thrown out of the window, and afterwards exposed to the people. His widow, Anne, devoted herself from that moment, to a life of religion. She changed her house into a monastery, and shut-

\* Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. tom. VI.



ting herself up there with many noble women, continued there till her death, which was in odor of sanctity. "This monastery," adds Machiavel, "which bears her name, will perpetuate her memory till the end of time."\*

The horror which was inspired by every violation of this union, shows what was the general opinion and practice of those times. Many memorable scenes were the result of these contrasts. Let us imagine ourselves present at the Council of Rheims, at which Pope Calixtus the Second assisted, and mark what takes place on the third day. Hildegarde, countess of Poitiers, enters with a numerous suite of ladies and guards; she is a princess of great beauty, of about thirty years of age; tears stand in her eyes, which she wipes away from time to time. She makes an eloquent and feeling harangue, complaining that her husband has forsaken her, to the great scandal of the Church. The whole assembly is moved to compassion. The Pope asks, if the Count is present, conformable to the order sent to him to attend; the bishop of Saintes explains the reason of his prince's absence, who has been delayed on his road by sickness. The Pope then fixes a time for him to appear to hear his sentence of excommunication, unless he should take back his countess. The love and respect of which women generally were the objects during the middle ages, might alone be deemed a sufficient proof of the eminent sense of virtue and justice which belongs to them.

At the time of the Crusades, when the armies of Europe were to assist at the spectacle of Mahometan manners and of the religion of sense, there was reason to fear that their condition in that respect might suffer a sad reverse; but, as a French writer remarks, it was precisely at that epoch, when the sweet and persuasive voice of St. Bernard, celebrating the praise of Mary, furnished an antidote to the fascination of the ancient Oriental serpent, and offered to its impure seduction the enthusiasm of chivalrous love. There are single deeds which show the general spirit of these times, and which we find upon every tongue, as symbols of universal duty, where knightly or manly virtue was the theme. Such was the act of Bruce, to which Isabella alludes, in the poem of the Lord of the Isles.

" Robert! I have seen  
Thou hast a woman's guardian been!  
Even in extremity's dread hour,  
When press'd on thee the Southern power,  
And safety, to all human sight,  
Was only found in rapid flight,  
Thou heard'st a wretched female plain,  
In agony of travail pain,  
And thou didst bid thy little band  
Upon the instant turn and stand,  
And dare the worst the foe might do,  
Rather than, like a knight untrue,

\* Hist. of Florence, Lib. VI.

Leave to pursuers merciless

A woman in her last distress."\*

While the Church protected women from injury, the laws of the state contributed to preserve in society the delicate impressions of respect which were their due, and punished any insult by severe penalties. When grave and austere magistrates came forward, like Stephen Pasquier, declaring that they would rather incur any censure than resemble John de Mehun, who, in his romance of the Rose, had professed expressly to despise women,† it cannot excite surprise to find knights and noblemen resisting as personal outrage, the publication of any thing that tended to weaken the faith of female virtue.

The learned and amiable Antony Woodville, earl of Rivers, had translated from the French "The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers," in which he left out some strictures on women, that were in the original. These Caxton translated, inserting them as an appendix to his printed edition, with many apologies for the correction. "I did not presume," he says, "to put them in my said lord's book, but in the end apart, in the rehearsal of the works, that Lord Rivers, or any other person, if they be not pleased may erase it, or else rend the leaf out of the book, humbly beseeching my said lord to take no displeasure on me so presuming."

Alas, reader, how strange, how extravagant and absurd, perhaps, will this sound in the ears of many at present, whom like deaf adders, the harmonious voice of exquisite sentiment can no longer charm? The leaf which our fathers would have torn out and trampled upon with indignation, would now be thought the sweetest and most attractive page that could be presented to any eye. Erase it, indeed, or else rend it out of the book! Such counsel is no longer in harmony with our opinions or our manners. It was for the gentle ones of Catholic times to follow it, who were taught nothing else in philosophy, in literature, in poetry, in painting, and in the whole development and order of society, but that from woman arose upon them the sun of justice,—Christ their God. It was for the men of the middle ages to feel that scorn, who beheld woman, angel-like, leading youth hand in hand to heaven, meanwhile distributing on earth the palms of virtue, as arbitress and judge. It was for them to feel indignant, who could from experience and conviction say of woman,

"All higher knowledge in her presence falls

Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her

Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows."

No, Caxton, thy book is safe at present, come what may hereafter. Onward let us pass.

\* IV.

† Recherches de la France, Lib. VI. 34.

## CHAPTER IV.



THE shadowy forms that are now before us, indicate that we are come to a scene that may for me be termed the passage perilous, of which old fables speak. Love, that in gentle hearts is quickly learnt, pleased so passing well the heroic ages of which I tell the manners, that, as thou perceivest, reader, I cannot pursue my journey without beholding it ; for the image is too intimately connected with the times I describe, to be excluded from any picture that would faithfully represent them. Nevertheless, though with downward looks, we have encouragement to proceed ; for if, by sweet thoughts and fond desire many to an evil pass were destined, there were others, and doubtless not a few in these simple ages, whose smiles or sighs can be remembered without exciting grief or pity.

In the vain fabling of the ancients, the distinctions of nature are often truly indicated. "Love," says Plato, "is not one person, but there are two loves, the one elder and born without a mother, the daughter of Ouranus, the most ancient of all the gods, and we call this Uranian love ; but the other younger, daughter of Jupiter and Dione, which we call public or common, and this of itself is neither good nor evil, but it may be either, according as it is accompanied ; and thus all love is not fair or worthy to be praised. The common love is what belongs to the evil part of men, who have no regard to what is well or otherwise, but regard only their senses, whereas the elder love binds men to the soul. The former, which regards the body rather than the soul, is evil, for it is not durable, being related to a matter which is not durable, ceasing with its departure, and containing in itself nothing fixed or permanent unless the total want of generous friendship."\* We find this distinction as clearly pointed out by the writers of the middle ages, though differently expressed. In allusion to the latter, Richard of St. Victor uses an image, which Dante seems to have copied in his representations of hell ; for he says, "men hate in loving, and love in hating ; and in a wondrous and wretched manner, hate grows from desire and desire from hate. Fire and hail mixed are their portion. And what is this but a certain form of future damnation, where spirits pass from the heat of fire to the cold of snow, and from the cold of snow to the heat of fire ? When the human mind is drawn violently to this state of love, nothing remains but that it should be prayed for by others, if perchance the Lord, looking on their faith, should restore the

\* Conviv. 9. 10.



dead to life.”\* On the other hand, speaking of the former, the same great master observes, “than the sweetness of love nothing is found pleasanter, nothing from which the mind derives a more lively joy.”† If this were not a matter on which faith had thrown a new light, there would have been, however, no necessity for our approaching these dangerous and doubtful limits. But during the middle ages there is a wondrous change to be remarked in the development and exercise of human passions; for the love which Plato rejects, seemed to have then acquired many qualities which before had been exclusively possessed by that which he called the older or Uranian love. Like it, this passion of the sentient nature bound men to the soul, and contained in itself something durable, being allied to a generous and immortal friendship. Nay, like that which was amongst the oldest of things, it was capable of becoming, as Phædrus says, “a cause of the greatest good to men.”

In the first place, it was associated with that restoration of the dignity and happiness of the female sex, which had been effected by the Christian faith, and by the discipline and laws of the Catholic Church. Plutarch says, in one of his moral works, that “as for true love, women have no part in it;” and Montesquieu observes that Plutarch speaks the universal opinion of his age. What language! what an age! Moreover, we find that immediately on the diffusion of the Christian faith, love became associated with the hopes of a future and immortal existence, as may be witnessed in the visions of Hermas, who records the recollections of his early love; and describes his seeing the heavens open, as he knelt one day praying in a meadow, and beholding the maid whom he had loved looking out of the clouds to salute him. Truly there was a justice in love, which, under the divine forms of the Catholic religion, gave rise to ineffable relations that did so evenly temper passion within mortal breasts, it ne’er could warp to any wrongfulness. From the day when first discourse was heard of the revered sire, before whom knelt the maiden who had heard the secret vow of faithful and devoted affection, earthly things seemed joined to divine in a still more intimate manner than they had ever been before in the hearts of the young. The dulcet strains of holy choirs, which had even in childhood thrilled them, acquired a deeper and still sweeter sense, and the *vitam venturi sæculi*, thrice shouted forth in solemn harmony, was like an authoritative voice proclaiming that they espoused a loveliness that was to be in bliss and safety everlasting. To be convinced that this union between the two loves had been realized, we need only consult any of the popular writers or poets of the middle age, who seemed to know of no love which was not a principle of virtue, or almost a source of sanctification to the soul. Love in the sense of chivalrous manners co-operated with religion in making men despise riches and earthly grandeur, and submit cheerfully to a life

\* Rich. de S. Vict. *Tractat. de quatuor gradibus violentæ charitatis*, I.

† *De Trinitate*, I. III. 14.

of hardship, and cultivate that noble spirit of sacrifice which plays such an important part in the whole of Catholic life. That reply to Juliet would have found an echo in every youthful breast,

“Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death ;  
I am content if thou wilt have it so :  
I have more care to stay than will to go :  
Come death and welcome ! Juliet wills it so.”

Huber says that in the young Spaniard who would render himself amiable in the common walks of life, moderation and temperance in every thing are an indispensable qualification. Avarice, or what the Spaniards name *Miseria*, would not dishonor him more than drunkenness or effeminacy. If you will credit writers of the middle ages, love made young men gentle and humble, devoted and generous. They will tell you that there moved a hidden virtue from the heart of woman which, like a heavenly influence, prompted them to every thing well and fair ; that as the partiality or peculiar devotion for particular altars, or chapels evinced by the angelic maiden, seemed to enhance the reverence for those who loved them for the same, so did they cast a perfume, an air of paradise over the most ordinary actions. The ancient writers love to remark how the Catholic religion supplied the young as they passed on through the different stages and relations of life at the entrance of every new sphere, with some principle, the observance of which was calculated to endear them to others. The working of these divine wheels produced sweet music, ever varied and alike unearthly, even when it seemed to attach men by fresh bonds to the earth. It made them assiduous scholars, joyous and generous companions, disinterested and faithful lovers, affectionate husbands, benignant and wise fathers, courageous and free subjects, merciful and just rulers, and by domestic virtues secured the public tranquillity ; for fearful is the void left in society when, in place of the loving and gentle affections, the sweet charities, the amiable relations of life, springing from the experienced or remembered love of young hearts, is substituted cold and passionless reason, or hatred like that of demons, and pride such as reigned in fallen angels plotting to begods. What renders, however, the love of the middle ages, a phenomenon wholly unprecedented in the moral history of man, was the supernatural tone which was imparted to it by faith in the doctrines of the Catholic religion.

“I bless the happy moment,” says Petrarch, “that directed my heart to Laura. She led me to see the path of virtue, to detach my heart from base and grovelling objects ; from her I am inspired with that celestial flame which raises my soul to heaven, and directs it to the Supreme Cause, as the only source of happiness.” If Plutarch, in the passage formerly quoted, speaks the sense of his contemporaries, it is not less true that Petrarch, in these words, expresses the opinion of the middle ages, with regard to the nature and consequences of love. After reading the works of Richard of St. Victor, and other great contemplatists of that time, one

might suppose that love could not be severed from charity, which is the destruction of all vices. The maiden that was chosen by the heroic youth of those times, she to whom he would plight his troth, though to have her and death were both one thing, had always a chaplet in her hands, and as she smiled, her thoughts seemed ever fixed upon the joy of angels. She would have given counsel like Beatrice to Dante, when he beheld her with such rapture of celestial bliss, that affection found no room for other wish.

"Vanquishing me with a beam  
Of her soft smile, she spake : 'Turn thee, and list:  
These eyes are not thy only paradise.'"\*

In love all her wish was innocence, all her thoughts were prayer :

"I have need of many orisons  
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,  
Which well thou know'st is cross and full of sin."

Such is the timid language of that love which inspired the genius of the middle ages ; for hear the great master who represents it, and who was himself its most glorious image, "Love awakens and excites us ; it give us wings to fly to the highest regions, and oft its burning flame is the first stage, where the soul, ill at ease here below, rises to the Creator. All its desires are lofty ; it can purify the soul." It is thus that Michael Angelo conceives the love of woman.† And who need be reminded of the noble sense in which the bards of chivalry and the authors of knightly romance understood love ? It is their sentiment which is expressed by the modern poet :

"Time tempers love, but not removes,  
More hallow'd when its hope is fled:  
Oh ! what are thousand living loves  
To that which cannot quit the dead ?"

In the palmerin of England, the knight of death, when he had lost his fair love, would still always carry about her image, at the sight of which he went forth to his adventures, with as lively a regard to her honor as though she still smiled upon him.

If you would estimate the sensibility of the middle ages, and learn what impressions affection caused in them, you should hear some tale of death in love, attached to their simple annals. "Come forth, thou fearful man," says the friar in Shakespeare, speaking in the very spirit of those days, "affliction is enamored of thy parts, and thou art wedded to calamity." But amidst this profound woe, what consolation had they in their faith ! Their love was associated with images of celestial brightness and eternal beatitude. Let us hear Dante, speaking of himself in his *Vita Nuovo*. "Some days afterwards, I experienced a painful infirmity. I suffered from it unceasingly during many days, so that I became weak, and like

\* Parad. XVIII.

† Sonnets.



those who cannot move themselves. On the ninth day, during an almost intolerable pain it occurred to me to think of the lady that I loved. When I had dreamt of her some time, I began to think of my weakened life, and seeing how uncertain was its course, even were I to be in perfect health, I began to lament within myself all such misery. Then after a deep sigh, I said to myself, 'Of necessity the lovely Beatrice must die some time or other;' and then such a wandering of ideas seized me, that I closed my eyes, and began to labor like one in frenzy, and to fancy a thousand things. During this delirium, figures of women with dishevelled hair, appeared to me, saying, 'you also will die'; and then other figures still more horrible presented themselves, and said to me, 'you are dead.' My imagination having begun to wander, I at length no longer knew where I was, and I seemed to behold women walking, and their hair floating down, weeping and lamenting; and the sun seemed to be obscured, and the stars to become of such a color that I thought they were in mourning. Amazed and terrified at this vision, I thought that a friend came to me and said, 'do you not know that your admirable lady is departed from this world?' Then I began to weep bitterly, and not only did I weep in imagination, but I wept with a flood of real tears. I thought that I looked up to heaven, and that I saw a multitude of angels, who were returning up thither, and had before them a cloud very white; and I thought that the angels sung a glorious hymn, and that I could hear the words of their chant, *hosanna in excelsis*, and that I could hear nothing more. Then it seemed as if my heart said to me, 'it is true—our well-beloved lady is dead.' And I thought then that I went to see the body in which this noble and blessed soul had dwelt, and this deceitful imagination, which showed me my lady dead, was so strong, that it seemed as if I saw the women who covered her head with a white veil, and it seemed to me that her countenance had such an air of humility, that I thought I heard her say, 'I behold the principle of sovereign peace.' In this imagination I called to her, saying, 'dear departed one, come to me, be not cruel, come to me who deserveth you so much, and who already, as you see, weareth your colors.' And when I had seen all the sorrowful offices discharged, which are due to inanimate bodies, I thought that I returned to my chamber, and that from thence I looked up to heaven; and my illusion was so great that I began to say aloud, 'O beautiful soul! how blessed is he that seeth thee!'"

The love of the middle ages is now ranked among the follies and eccentricities of an epoch that was immersed in darkness and barbarism. Nevertheless, I shall relate somewhat from its traditions and records, though my discourse should seem like an old tale, which will have matter still to rehearse, though credit be asleep, and not an ear open.

When king Gyron le Courtois, king Melyadus, another knight, and a certain maiden, had come to the spot in the forest where the young knight was slain, they found his body stretched across the road, his hand still grasping his sword, and his

helmet on his head. All the road was deep in blood about him. Then the maiden alighted and went gently up to him, and took off his helmet, and his mouth was full of blood. So after gazing on him for a long time with a distracted look, she burst into tears, and said, "Ah, beauteous friend, how dearly hast thou paid for my love! The good and the joy which thou hast had from me have been only sad and bitter death: beauteous friend, courteous and wise, valiant, heroic, good knight in every guise, since thou hast lost thy youth for me in this manner, in this strait, and in this agony, as it clearly appears, what else remains for me to suffer for thy sake, unless that I should keep you company? Friend, friend, thy beauty is departed for the love of me; thy flesh lies here bloody. Friend, friend, we were both nourished together. I knew not what love was when I gave my heart to love thee. Thee only will I love without fail, and besides thee no other, and certainly I know that thou didst love only me. Young friend, thou wert my joy and my consolation; for to see thee and to speak to thee alone was sufficient to inspire joy. Friend, whilst alive, thou wert mine in will, and it is clear that thou wert also mine at death. Friend, what I behold slays me; I feel that death is within my heart." Then taking up his sword, she kissed it, and holding it in her hands, turned to Melyadus and implored him that he would have the knight buried on that spot, and that he would have her body placed by his side in the grave.

"How, in God's name," said the king, "what mean you? Do I not behold you in good health, and fair, so as to surpass all the maidens upon earth?" "Sire," she replied, "you do not feel what I feel. My sorrow is greater than you suppose. I know of a certainty that I shall die this day, and will you promise me, in God's name, to grant me this prayer?" The king, all amazed and concerned, replied, "Truly I cannot believe that it should happen as you say; but if it should be so, which God avert, I will have your wish fulfilled." Then turning to Gyron, they talked together concerning the slain knight, while the maiden knelt down over the body, and kissed the sword, which she held firm in her hands, as she gazed upon him. When Gyron perceived that she remained so long without moving, he cried out to the king, "Sire, wouldst thou behold the strangest marvel that thou hast ever seen since thou wert born?" "Yea, that would I; show it to me," replied Melyadus. "In God's name, then, thou shalt see it; approach that maiden, and thou wilt find that she has died of grief." "Impossible!" exclaimed the king. "Nay, but it is so," said Gyron, "or never believe me more." And the king, who could not believe him, came up to the maiden, and certainly of a truth he then saw clearly enough that she was dead, and he signed himself on witnessing this wondrous sight. The other knight also signed himself with the sign of the cross. "Well," said the king, "it is even so. Sooth, one can say with safety that the maid loved truly, and with great love; for she hath died for him." "It is so," said Gyron, "now can there be from this event, a strange tale henceforth told. I will compose a lay, and a new chant,

which shall be recorded and sung after our death, in many foreign kingdoms. Let us at present provide for their burial; but how shall we discover their names, that we may write them on their tomb?" "We can only learn that," replied Melyadus, "by riding to the castle yonder, which is called le Chastel Ygerve, where they were both born, for they were born both in one castle, and they were nourished together." So to that castle they rode, and alighting, were received and instructed as to the name of the knight, which was Absdlon, and of the maiden, which was Cesala, and Gyron made a lay, which is still known as "the lay of the two lovers."\*

You perceive, reader, how justice is expressly brought forward here as the principle of this devoted affection, which requires the offering of life for life. Now this constancy in love, and the faith which could receive such testimony of it as credible, belong, in a most remarkable degree, to the manners of the middle age, so as to be found even in men whom all things else abandon. "With one solitary exception, all misfortunes that flesh is heir to have been visited on me," says the unhappy Jordano Bruno, in the dedication of a poem to Sir Philip Sidney, who received him into his house when he visited London as a wandering, homeless exile. "I have tasted every kind of calamity but one, that of finding false a woman's love!"

The manners of Spain, till lately at least, were said, among other characteristic features of the middle age, to have retained this fidelity. "As it may be well imagined," says Huber, "women, and through them, love, occupy a very important place in the social life of the Spaniards. Love, and the conversation of women in Spain, imply neither foppish gallantry, and cold calculation, as in France, nor rude sensuality, and defined, faithless formality, as amongst northern nations; but on the contrary, the real emotions of the guileless heart, ever earnest, reciprocal, true, and holy.†"

We have seen the fair side; let us reverse the medal:

"Oh! how this spring of love resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day;  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by and by a cloud takes all away!"

Reader, from what source descend the greatest evils into the bosom, whence the rib was taken, to fashion that fair cheek, whose taste all the world pays for, even Gentiles in their fabling showed?

Love, exceeding measure, brings neither glory nor virtue to men.‡

Φεῦ, Φεῦ, βροτοῖς ἔρωτες ὡς κακὸν μέγα.§

Why seem these eyes created only to devour an eternal tear? What men are

\* Gyron le Courtois, f. CCIX.

† Eurip. Med. 627.

‡ Skizzen aus Spanien. XXVI.

§ Id. 331.



these with minds which appear the echo of all the melancholies that are in nature? Love, abandoned to itself, hath done this. They sought a balm, and they found a poison; they sought their dream, on rising from their couch, and they found the wound in their heart; they sought for rest, and found the tempest; they sought the way of their young years, and they found the way of eternal grief. Alack! alack! that fond nature should disdain counsel, rush headlong to its ruin, and then forsooth, complain that heaven should practise stratagems upon so soft a subject as itself! Reader, wouldst thou hear a piteous predicament, some moving story of deep love? Open any of the domestic histories of the middle age, visit the abbeys of Cluny, or Citeaux, and search into the past life of the convertites who mourn there, and then if thou art a poet, thou wilt not depart unsatisfied; only be pitiful; let not the force of vulgar speech move thee to scorn, but bend thine eyes down, as if to view memorials of the buried, drawn upon earth-level tombs. Remember, that if the world for human passions, be all temptation, and yet all severity, the converse marks the Church, which is all prevention; and on the other hand, all forgiveness. Nay, ere you leave her sanctuaries for penitence prepared, there may perhaps be found some aged father, who has had long experience and deep knowledge of the minds of men, who will intimate to you, by tears and looks significant, that those old writers whom your great poet speaks of, uttered truth in saying, "as in the sweetest bud the eating canker dwells, so eating love inhabits in the finest wits of all."

Dante marks the distinction well, when of love he says,

"—— While e'er it seeks  
The primal blessings, or with measure due  
The inferior, no delight, that flows from it  
Partakes of ill. But let it warp to evil,  
Or with more ardor than behoves, or less  
Pursue the good; the thing created then  
Works 'gainst its Maker."\*

Doubtless, where love was suffered to grow up without restraint or guidance, where it was not sanctified by the principles and hopes of faith, the result could only have resembled that which Ahasverus, in the fable, confesses having experienced. "In all my joys," he says, "there is pain at the bottom; and this pain is so bitter, that no sweets of love can remove the taste. I thought that would pass, and it has only increased; I sought to adore her that I loved in all things. If I heard the brook murmur, I used to say, it is her sigh; if I saw the deep abyss, I would say, it is her heart; of the clouds and stars, and of the breath of evening, I made an eternal Rachel. Forgive me if I confess the truth. This fervor, which I recall to mind, is now my despair. All this world has passed; it has withered on my heart."

Dante represents Beatrice as reproaching him for having overlooked the true destiny of love.

“ ——— When from flesh  
To spirit I had risen, and increase  
Of beauty and of virtue circled me,  
I was less dear to him, and valued less.  
His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,  
Following false images of good, that make  
No promise perfect.”\*

Yet old history is not without moving narratives which prove that even in such cases there was often something gained, as when men learned to add, with an effectual desire after justice, “O, if I could know what it was to be loved by heaven! O, if I could taste divine love! For it is a force stronger than mine, which impels me to love more than with love, and to lose myself in that sea of Christ which they say is deep enough to receive to rest innumerable souls, and all their remembrances with them.” Search the annals of religious orders, search the particular history of each abbey, and there you will find what was the end of that thirst, the source of so many tales of poesy and woe,—the names of Antonius Santaranensis, James of Tuderto, Raymund Lullus, the Abbot de Rancy, are as familiar to the cloister, as they were once to bower and hall.

“I have seen vain love,” says a saint of the desert, “made occasion of penance, and the same love transferred to God; love excluded by love, and fire extinguished by fire.†” It was these victims who became the fervent penitents. What do I say? they became the poets who, like Jacoponus, have left to the Church, chants of seraphs and hymns, that breathe heaven. Ah me! they seem to cry each moment, “How sweet is love, itself possest, when but love’s shadows are so rich in joy!”

\* Purg. XXX.

† St. John Climac. Grad. XV.

## CHAPTER V.



ANNUNTIABERUNT opera Dei, thus chanted voices when I prepared to move onwards. Et facta ejus intellexerunt, others added in responsive strain, while I saw a crowd who sat apart with such effulgence crowned, as sent forth beauteous things eternal. These had all been separate to the Church; these had all pleased God in their days, and had been found just. They had trusted in the Lord, and had preached his precepts, and had turned men to justice, and had been heard from the holy mountain.

Attend now, reader, and mark intently as thou canst, whilst I endeavor to unfold a grand historic page, and show what was the institution, character, action, and influence of the clergy, in relation to the fulfilment of the divine promise, to those who hungered and thirsted after God.

The ecclesiastical discipline which imposed celibacy on all who ministered at the altar, originated in the motives alleged by the apostle of the nations, the justice, and irresistible weight, of which might be collected out of the mouths even of those adversaries, who in different ages of the Church, have pretended that the reasons which prescribe its abolition, would rather sink the scale. The remark of Anselm de Bagadio, Bishop of Lucca, in the time of Gregory VII. that the deficiency of the clergy of Milan, in preaching and other good works, must arise from their being married (an abuse which under the direction of the Roman Pontiffs, along with St. Arialdo, and St. Herlembald, he was appointed to correct,) is sufficient to disprove all the arguments of the historian Landulph, who incautiously records it, even had he not so grossly falsified the doctrine of antiquity, in order to prove that marriage had been permitted to his clergy by St. Ambrose.\* At the first, this discipline could not have appeared new or paradoxical to the Gentile philosophers, who had consulted the early traditions, or had paid attention to the condition and phenomena of human life. St. Augustin remarks in his book, "De Vera Religione," that Plato chose a life of celibacy merely from philosophic speculations.

The Greek poet speaks of the advantages of men who are without the marriage state, and says, that "those who are not fathers of children, not knowing whether it be sweet or bitter to possess them, however unhappy in this ignorance, are

\* Muratori in Landulph. Prolegomena, Rer. Ital. Script. tom. IV.



yet delivered from many labors." But he adds, "I behold those in whose houses there is this sweet fruit, oppressed with cares unceasingly ; first with respect to the manner in which they should educate them, and then as to their means of leaving them a provision, while after all, it is uncertain whether they undergo all this labor for those that will prove good or evil."\* The old Roman authors gave a definition, fanciful, it is true, of the word expressing an unmarried life, tracing it from that which expressed a celestial life, delivered from the burden of earthly cares.†

Of the objection founded upon political reasons, it is needless to speak : for the arguments of those who adduce it are generally involved in such contradiction, that they refute themselves, as in the work entitled, "New Principles of Political Economy," by Sismondi, one part of which is devoted to attacking ecclesiastical celibacy, and the other to proving the necessity of interdicting marriage to the poor.

After a review of the ancient states, and the changes wrought by Christianity, some have come to the conclusion of Rubichon, that a clergy, under the discipline of celibacy, with its property and its different relations, were the conditions of existence of modern society.‡ He that was sent affirms, it is better to adopt the state which the Church sanctions ; those who speak on their own authority denied that it was.

The moral difficulties which are said to oppose the discipline of the Church, though they may have a greater show of reality, were not deemed sufficient to justify its abrogation. Louis of Blois meets, in limine, those who think them insurmountable, and speaks as if experience and common sense were sufficient to disprove their assertions. "They say," he observes, "that they cannot live continently ; but they do not say the truth ; for they received reason and free will from God, and his grace is never wanting to the humble."§ It is curious to find the heathen moralist appealing to experience, in order to disprove the proposition which Luther maintained ; for speaking of sensual pleasures, Cicero says, "ab iisque abstinere minime esse difficile, si aut valetudo, aut officium, aut fama postulet."|| Had other objections which seem of some weight in the modern schools, been brought forward in days of the old learning, their supporters would not have been treated with more respect than were the old men condemned by Cephalus in the republic of Plato, who regretted the pleasures of their past youth, and seemed quite indignant at being deprived of great things thinking that before they had lived as men ought to live, *νῦν δὲ οὐδὲ ἔσονται*. It would have been deemed a sufficient answer to reply to such protesters, in the words of Sophocles ; *εὐφήμεί, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, ἀσμενέστατα μέντοι αὐτὸ ἀπέφυγον, ὥρπερ λυτιῶντα τινὰ καὶ ἄγριον δεσπότην ἀποφυγών*.¶

\* Eurip. Medea, 1088.

† Quintil. Lib. II.

‡ Du Mécanisme de la Société en France et en Angleterre, 272.

§ Epist. ad Florentium.

|| Tuscul. Lib. V. 33.

¶ Lib. I.

"Certainly, it is not I who will speak against marriage," says a modern French historian, "this state also has its sanctity. Nevertheless, would not the virginal union of the priest and the Church be troubled by a marriage less pure? Would the mystic paternity hold against the natural? Even if he were to accomplish all the works of the priesthood, could he then preserve its spirit? No; there is in the holiest marriage something which softens the iron, and bends the steel; the firmest heart loses something of itself. And this poesy of solitude, those manly pleasures of abstinence, that plenitude of charity and of life, when the soul embraces God and the world, can all this as easily subsist in the conjugal state? Without doubt, there is a pious emotion on beholding the cradle of one's child; but where are the solitary meditations, the mysterious dreams, the sublime tempests, in which combatted within us God and man?"\* Such thoughts may seem proper food for the peculiar kind of merriment which used to be so extremely offensive to Johnson, though "the sad priest" would have seen in them the testimony of reason, to the wisdom of that choice with which the Sacred Scriptures have associated the promise of an inheritance better than sons and daughters,"† and to which philosophy may ascribe a multiplied return, even to those who still wear mortal flesh; for as Tieck declares, through the lips of a certain stout and deep-souled Baron, "there are in life a great many sorts of happiness to be consumed."

As early as the fourth century, we find the clergy externally distinguished from the laity by their dress.‡

Pope St. Stephen, in the reign of the emperors Valerian and Gallienus, ordained that priests and deacons should never use their sacred vestments excepting in the church. During the middle ages, the secular clergy did not exclusively wear black habits. It appears from a bequest in the Testament of Nicolas Flamel, of cloth for the clergy, and also from old banners in churches, and ancient paintings, that priests wore at pleasure cassocks of black or brown, or of bluish cloth.

Clerks bore the tonsure as serfs of God; for only the chiefs of the Franks could let their hair grow long, and the rest were shorn. It was an ancient usage among the Romans to wear short hair. The Barbarians wore long hair. The Jews imitated the Romans. When the Gentiles were admitted into the Church, it was usual to cut the hair of all such as entered among the clergy. Some have supposed, that the tonsure originated with the penitents, from whom the monks adopted it; and that thence it passed to the clergy, who desired to imitate the monastic state.§ The clerical tonsure became of three kinds; there was the tonsure of St. Peter, prevailing in the west, which left a circlet of hair like a crown; the tonsure of St. Paul, leaving no circlet, which prevailed in the east, and with the Greek monks, of which Bede speaks, saying, "that the monk

\* Michelet, *Hist. de France*, II. 109.

† Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. Lib. I. tit. I.

‡ Isaiah lvi.

§ G. Devoti Instit. Can. I.1.

Theodore came into England with the tonsure of St. Paul, and that he had to wait till his hair grew, before he could appear with the crown." Finally, the Britons, Picts, and Irish, had another tonsure, wearing only a half circle of hair on the fore part of the head.

Objects which we beheld formerly, in relation to the duties of the blessed meek, present themselves again in this place, as connected with the accomplishment of justice. Formed to war against the huge army of the world's desires, the soldiers of Christ were spread throughout the whole social state in such a manner, that their action might produce the greatest effect, being both diversified to suit the variety of degrees, and united in order to maintain the efficacy of the whole. "As God is a God of order, it is of consequence," says Leibnitz, "that to the body of the one Catholic and apostolic Church, there should be one supreme spiritual Magistrate, with directorial power for accomplishing all things necessary for the safety of the Church."\* The Church was a monarchy. "The Papal state," says the celebrated Gerson, "is instituted by Christ, supernaturally and immediately, as having a monarchal and regal primacy in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, according to which one and supreme state, the Church militant, is called one under Christ, which primacy whoever presumes to impugn, or to diminish, or to make equal to any other peculiar ecclesiastical state, if he should do this pertinaciously, is a heretic, a schismatic, a man impious and sacrilegious."† As far as veneration is implied, this is not merely the language of that school in which learned the defenders of the Vatican. Pasquier, who goes so far in defending what were termed "the liberties of the Gallican Church," as to declare that he esteems him as a heretic who thinks that the kings of France are not established by God to command their subjects absolutely,"‡ Pasquier, who would transfer to French bishops the power that could only be exercised by him who was perpetually free, and independent,§ who speaks of the most odious acts of Philip-le-Bel, against Boniface, as having been mitigated and reversed, "by a liberality truly French," who would support the pretension of the French kings which affirmed, that if they received any one at their table, he ought to be received by the priests into the communion of the faithful, that those whom the piety of the prince embraced, should not be rejected by the Church as heathens,|| Pasquier, who thinks that as the disputes between the senate and the tribunes, in the old times of Rome, were the means of retaining both in their proper limits, so the disputes between the Gallicans of the university of Paris, and the Romans were beneficial to the Church, the consulship of which was in the city of Rome, while the tribunes were in France,¶ even this Gallican magistrate professes a profound veneration for the Holy See. "As far as regards myself," he says, "I wish it to be known, that I respect and honor the Holy See of Rome, not to gain any

\* Leibnitz. Epist. VIII. tom. I.

† Recherches de la France. Lib. III. 17.

|| Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 18.

† De Statu. Sum. Pont. Consid. I.

§ Id. III. 36.

¶ III. 29, 44.



personal advantage, by any act injurious to the honor of my country, but after the old fashion of Gaul, and in the same manner as our ancestors have done. And I have made the above discourse, not from any ill will which I nourish against the Holy See, rather may God visit me with death, but to show that our king bears his safe conduct with his crown.”\*

The See of Rome being like a common butt, against which many people let fly their arrows, the heresy of Luther and Calvin, and at present, the race of sophists discarding all religion, inviting them to it as to a feast, it may be well to pause a moment, though we partially examined this point in former books, in order, by a few rapid glances to detect the prodigious solidity and extent of the foundations on which rested the doctrine of its power.

“The Mass,” says Luther, “is the rock on which is founded the popedom.” Nothing could be more truly or justly said ; for even the visible, material organization of the Catholic Church, was in a wondrous manner associated with its doctrines, its living principles, and its faith, as the human soul is connected with the mechanism of the body. When Christ said, *tu es Petrus*, and what follows, he did not mean to abandon his own right to be head of the Church ; nevertheless, in these divine words, he made that apostle its foundation, and gave to him and his successors that primacy, the exercise of which in all ages, as a fact of history, is proved by the very protestations and cautionary measures of distant churches, when its action gave them displeasure. The contention between St. Peter and St. Paul was not respecting a point of faith, but a question of fact and economy. The dissension between Paul and Barnabas was respecting a companion ; for the former did not wish to have Marcus for his associate, as the latter proposed. St. Cyprian did not regard the question of baptism as one of faith ; pope St. Stephen had not expressly and explicitly defined it, so that two centuries afterwards, St. Augustin said, that it had not, up to his time, been clearly defined. How did the religious innovators account for that fact, attested by St. Augustin, that not only they were disposed to disparage the prince of the apostles, as Fuller complains, but the Pagans also had vehemently hated the apostle Peter ? † St. Augustin says, that “when the Pagans saw that the Christian religion increased in spite of persecution, they began to think of certain Greek oracular verses which pronounced Christ to be innocent, but affirmed, that Peter, by his magic, contrived to have the name of Christ worshipped for 365 years, after which there would be an end of it. “O the madness of these men !” cries St. Augustin, “to believe that Peter, his disciple, and though he had not learned magical arts from Christ, yet was a magician, and that he preferred having the name of Christ worshipped rather than his own ; for which object he was to employ his magic, and to undergo great labors, and finally death ! If it was the wicked magician, Peter, who made the world fall in love with Christ, what did innocent Christ do in order to make Peter so

\* III. 18.

† Tract. Vi. art. 1. ad. 3.

‡ De Civitate Dei, Lib. XX. 24.

love him? *Nos ergo qui sumus vocamurque Christiani non in Petrum credimus, sed in quem credidit Petrus.* Edified by the sermons of Peter concerning Christ, not poisoned by incantations, nor deceived by magic, but assisted by his benefits, Christ, the master of Peter, in the doctrine which leads to eternal life, is himself our master.”\* This assuredly is an instance of what is remarked by the present supreme pontiff, that “facts intrinsically connected with doctrines, prove the doctrines themselves.” “The distinctive character of the government of the church,” to use the language of this illustrious pope, “was a perpetual and immutable activity, independent of the activity of the violence of men.”† The Pope might be resisted by a council when it was not certain he was pope, as in the case of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII., whom the council of Pisa took care to style *Pietro di Luna*; for the Church was provided with means of securing herself from being governed by an illegitimate pope, and also when by the pope’s own authority he was resisted, as in the case of John XXIII., who had promised previously to agree to whatever should be determined, even though it were to be against his own person. In no country, let it be remarked, was the papal authority overthrown, without the loud remonstrances and protestation of those whom men were commanded by God to hear, under pain of being transferred from his right hand to the left. One writer, at least on the side of the innovators, relates the fact as respecting England, with historical fidelity. “Upon the first expulsion of the pope’s authority,” says Weever, “and king Henry’s undertaking of the supremacy, the priests, both religious and secular, did openly in their pulpits so far extol the pope’s jurisdiction and authority, that they preferred his laws before the king’s. Whereupon the king sent his mandatory letters to certain of his nobility, and others in especial office, thinking thereby to restrain their seditions, false doctrines, and exorbitancy.”‡

With respect to the temporal power associated with this spiritual primacy, it will be sufficient to hear the opinions of men either formally in the ranks of its adversaries, or in reality its timid and suspicious friends. Amongst the former, Leibnitz justifies the policy of the middle ages in relation to the action of Rome, to such a degree, as to desire that it might revive from its ashes; and of the latter, Stephen Pasquier is a representative, whose testimony is as follows: “Never,” says he, “did any Principality begin from so low an origin according to the world’s thoughts; for it was built on an obstinate poverty, on a continued affliction, on a sworn martyrdom; and never did any Principality arrive at such an extreme degree of greatness; and that, not like other monarchies by arms, but by the renouncement of arms, by keeping aloof from the intrigues of empire, and in spite of all sorts of obstacles opposed to it from the very first, and of all dangers from mistaken or hostile zeal in later times, for never was there a dignity so

\* *Id.* Lib. XVIII. 54.

† *D. Capellari il trionfo della santo sede* Disc. Prelim. 33.

‡ *A discourse on funeral monuments*, p. 80.

much assailed by contradictory opinions, which nevertheless tended equally to undermine it.

The dignity of the see of Constantinople, which vainly attempted to claim equality by means of the favor of emperors, and by arrogating lofty titles founded on its local connection with the chief seat of earthly power, enjoyed but a short respite, and great and shameful was the fall and punishment; but that of Rome stood immovable and uninterruptedly triumphant, as if, to use the Gentile imagery, the fortune of the eternal city, weary of being commanded by arms, wished to try what new grandeur it could obtain under men who made profession only of the Word of God and Scripture.”\* Well might the nations subject to Christian Rome use the words which Torquato Tasso ascribes to them, and say, “O happy yoke! O fortunate subjection, by means of which we are become victorious in studies, in discipline, in empire. Truly, if there be any part of the world not subdued by the Romans, it remains in eternal darkness, not less than the Cimmerian people of whom the poets speak. Whereas, everywhere else men live under the reign of the Christian philosophy and equality of laws, forming one fold under one shepherd. Not many years after Plutarch had passed, the world had taken this form by means of the authority and power of the Roman Pontiffs. Spain, England, Scotland, Ireland, the farthest islands of the ocean, France, Germany, Pannonia, Sarmatia, Illyria, both Misias, Thrace, Macedonia, Epirus, Greece, and the provinces of Asia near the Euphrates, and those of Africa, Arabia, and Egypt, constituted one single republic and one church.”† All the names in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as Pasquier remarks, were more names of charge than of honor. “*Est magis oneris quam honoris*,” says Pope Symmachus of the Pallium, in his Epistle to a German Bishop. ‡ “*Quid est Episcopatus nisi cruciatus?*” says Ives de Chartres, “*quid aliud est hic honor nisi onus.*” § St. Peter Damian beholds in the short reign of the Roman Pontiffs, which has never equalled the years of Peter, the action of a divine ordinance, to show, as he tells Pope Alexander, how the glory of temporal life is to be despised upon that supreme seat.

At Rome, the ecclesiastical council, which answered to a senate, was composed of seventy members styled cardinals, a word to express pre-eminence, not from any ambition, or from their being the parish priests of Rome, since they existed before them, but of necessity, to distinguish them as the separate council of that Church.|| Landulph speaks of the twenty-four cardinals of the Church of Milan, appointed by St. Ambrose, ¶ for every bishop had a similar council of chosen priests and deacons similarly styled, whom he consulted in the government of his diocese, as we see St. Cyprian giving to his council a deliberative voice; and on the bishop’s death, they elected one of their body to succeed him. The digni-

\* *Recherches de la France*, Lib. III. c. 4.

† *Germanis Sacra*, I. 4.

|| *Joan. devoti Instit.* Can I. 3.

† *Risposta di Roma a Plutarco*.

§ *Epist.* XVII.

¶ *Mediolanens. Hist. Lib.* I. c. 4.



ty of the canons belonged not separately to each, but to the whole college, on which devolved the authority during the vacancy of the see. By ancient privilege, as the cardinals were not bound to reside in Rome, this great consistory and senate spread itself through all the kingdoms of Christendom, so that each cardinal was an assistant to secure the concord of Christian princes, a police, adds Pasquier, which was never known in any other republic.\*

Legates were styled, sent, and born. The archbishops of Canterbury and York, of Rheims and Lyons, of Toledo, Salzburg and Pisa, were legates born. Patriarchs exercised the same power over archbishops, which the latter exercised over bishops. The dignity of metropolitan or archbishop existed before the council of Nice, and is supposed to have come down from the apostles.† With the metropolitan dignity were invested Titus and Timothy, and their successors, who were appointed over the Churches of Crete and the whole province of Asia. The archbishop had the cross borne before him through the whole province, in token of his jurisdiction. By the council of Lateran, under Innocent the Third, metropolitans were enjoined to hold in their provinces every year a council of suffragan bishops, to reform what might be defective in the manners of the clergy; and for that end fit persons were to be deputed to take cognizance of the lives of ecclesiastics, and to make their report to this council.

All patriarchs and archbishops had the pallium, which was taken from the altar that contains the body of St. Peter, and therefore it was said to be taken from the body of St. Peter. On the day of St. Agnes, in the church of St. Agnes, in Via Nomentana, every year two white lambs are offered at mass, blessed at the Agnus Dei, and then delivered to be nourished in some convent of nuns until they are shorn. With their wool the pallium is made, which the Pope alone wears in all places and at all times, others only wearing it within the limits of their jurisdiction and on high festivals, when they celebrate pontifically. The pallium adhered to the person of the archbishop, and was buried with him in the same tomb.‡

“The state of episcopal pre-eminence,” says Gerson, “has the exercise of its power under the Pope, Peter and his successors, as under one having the plenary fountain of episcopal authority. So that as curates are subject to bishops, by whom the use of their power may be limited or taken away, in like manner doubtless has the Pope authority over prelates.”§ To a bishop were necessary both ordination and power of jurisdiction, which could be received only from him who had the supreme power over all the churches under Christ, namely, the Roman Pontiff.|| Not that the bishops were to be simple vicars of the Pope, as governors of a city, acting for the civil monarch. This was not a consequence of the Papal monarchy, but only an imaginary deduction of its adversaries. The Pope

\* Lib. III. 5.

† Joan. devoti Instit. Can. I. 3.

‡ Lib. I. tit. 3. § 3.

§ Gerson. de stat. Eccles. Consider. 3 de stat. præl.

|| Joan. devoti Instit. Can. Lib. I. tit. 2.

could do all things in the government of the Church, so long as he used his power for edification and not for destruction ; but bishops were elected for edification, that each might watch over his own flock, while one should have a more eminent power, to prevent schisms and disunion ; therefore the supreme Pontiff could never injure the episcopal office, any more than a bishop could oppose the subordination of all to one.\* From ancient times coadjutors were given to bishops. Alexander was given to Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, he being 120 years old ; and Augustin was given for a similar reason to Valerius, bishop of Hippo. Bishops used to be carried in chairs when they made their first entry into their cathedral, which was a custom originating in the forms of the old consular dignity.

With the solitary exception of Aërius, who could form no sect, the distinction of the episcopacy and priesthood was recognized, without contradiction, for more than 1400 years. The constant tradition of all the apostolic churches, attested an unbroken line of succession from the apostles ; and those which had been founded in later times, could similarly show the long line of their successive pastors, as in the great hall of the Episcopal Palace of Séez, where we behold the portraits of all the seventy-seven bishops that had filled that see from St. Latuin, in the year 400.†

In the fifth century, when St. Remi baptized Clovis, the church of Rheims already counted a succession of fifteen bishops.‡ That secondary and accessory power, which the wants of the nations and the reverence of their rulers granted to the episcopal office, may be traced after all to what the apostle suggests—“*Audet aliquis vestrum, habens negotium.*”§ For, as Estius says, “From this doctrine of the apostle, in the time of the Christian princes, it was the custom for Christians to bring their causes before their bishops, as arbiters, that they might be determined and judged by them; and at length, by the imperial constitutions, the bishops had the legal power of judging causes.”

From the beginning bishops had adopted external marks of their dignity. The apostles St. John and St. James, and the evangelist St. Mark, wore a border of gold upon their heads. The ring was given to bishops and abbots as an emblem of power, according to the words of the ritual : “*Ut quæ signanda sunt signes, et quæ operienda sunt prodas.*” From the life of St. Cæsarius of Arles, as also from that of St. Germain, it appears that in the sixth century, it was the custom for a clerk to bear the crosier before a bishop when he went to a church. In the fourth century we find that bishops were treated as lords. Anquetil observes that at Rheims, as in other metropolises, the temporal power of the prelate was insensibly established by the deference of the people for the wisdom and virtue of their first bishops ; though there it was more rapid in its progress by the especial favor of the kings of France.|| There were no parish priests during

\* *Capellari trionfo della santa sede.*

† D'Orville *Recherches Hist. sur la Ville et le Diocese de Séez.*

‡ Anquetil, *Hist de Rheims*, I. 54.

§ 1 Cor. 6.

|| *Hist. de Rheims*, tom. I. 10.

the first three centuries, for the bishop then presiding with his senate in the one church to which all repaired, was sufficient for the general wants. Nay, in cities there were no parish priests before the tenth century. The bishop would only send priests to different places according as he thought fit, and for a limited space of time. Subsequently the bishops chose to appoint permanent priests to govern parishes, so that the power of these parish priests emanated from the bishop, to whom they were always to be subject.\* By means of synods, the clergy were enabled to act in constant union, to their mutual correction and encouragement. Jacques de Silly, bishop of Séz, in order to give facility to his clergy to attend the synods, built a large house for them in his episcopal city, where he entertained them and their horses at his own expense during the session of these assemblies.

In the language of the first ages, the word parish, was used to signify diocese. Thus in the Apostolical Canons, and in Eusebius, *παροικίον* means bishopric, for it was not till the sixth century that the lesser divisions were established, which now bear the name of parish and that the mother church became distinguished by the title of cathedral.

Parish churches used in ancient times to be called monastery, or moutier, from the priests who served in them living in community. Thus St. Augustin formed a community of priests to serve each church. In the sixth century, St. Rigobert assigned goods in common to all the clergy of Rheims, who were bound to live in community under one roof. As Bonald observes, the life in community agreed much better with the religious functions of the ministers of religion, for in transferring the embarrassment of domestic cares to the body at large, it left the individuals more liberty of mind and of body to fulfil their public functions, and it tended to preserve in them the spirit of their order.† In general, a title to some church or monastery was necessary for orders, but not always. Merely on account of learning and piety some were ordained without any specific destination, as in the instance of St. Jerome being ordained by Paulinus, bishop of Antioch.

This gradual and gentle descent from the highest to the lowest degree in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, was designed for the more effectual diffusion through the social order of the sacred deposit of faith, and for facilitating a strict and impartial administration of justice, all members being responsible to a higher tribunal, to which there was an instant appeal when circumstances rendered it desirable.

At Rheims, when the provost of the cathedral did homage to the archbishop, putting the left hand on his breast, he used to hold the right and keep it free, in sign of the engagement which he undertook, to defend the chapter against the enterprises of the prelate.‡ But to Rome all final appeals were made.

Pope St. Innocent the First received a deputation from St. Chrysostom, and,

\* Joan. devoti Instit. Can. Lib. I. tit. 3.

† Législation Primit. II. 266.

‡ Hist. de Rheims, Lib. I.



after his death, refused to communicate with the Oriental bishops, until they had reversed the sentence against his memory. This was long anterior to the date of the false decretals which schismatic doctors said were the origin of appeals to Rome. "As you know that it is a synodal law," says St. Avitus, writing to Senarius, "that in things relating to the state of the church, if there should be any source of debate, we, as it were, the obedient members, should have recourse to the great priest of the Roman Church as to our head, therefore I have applied to Hormisdas in this affair."\* In fact, the influence of that primal seat was in constant action, an intercourse being maintained between it and the most distant churches. In ancient times the bishops of Sicily used to go once in three years to Rome, but St. Gregory the Great extended the interval to five years.† In years of jubilee, Ferdinand de Bazan, archbishop of Palermo, used to send to Rome twelve priests and twelve laymen pilgrims.‡ Rome was the standard which all aspired to imitate. St. Odo of Cluni says, that he used to hear it said at Rome, in praise of the conversation of the clergy at Tours, that they who deserved to live near the Basilica of the blessed Martin, had no occasion to travel to Rome.§

Such, then, were the divisions and order of the sacred ministry: let us briefly examine into the measures adopted for its support, since what we considered in relation to the detachment and humility of the clergy in the first book, falls under observation here, in regard to the fulfilment of justice.

That tithes are by divine right, if we understand by them the support due to the clergy, but that they are not by divine right, if they be understood as the grant of the tenth part of fruits, was the doctrine of St. Thomas.|| Nevertheless, as Alfonso the Wise said, tithes were not paid for the sake of the clergy, but for the sake of God, who will reward the offerers in this world or in the next. Never, during the ages of faith, was the support of the clergy associated in the minds of men with the idea of any thing but the strictest justice. The mercy of the Church even interposed between the people and the state which desired to serve her. "Let there be no forced offerings to the Catholic clergy and to the church," says St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne. "Nunquam oblata pronuntiem quæ antequam offerentur oblata sunt."¶ The custom of paying tithes was not received generally in Spain until the sixteenth century, before which time there was no general law to enforce its payment. In France the curates of many parishes had no tithes, but only their nourishment in adjacent abbey, as simple monks.\*\*

The history of tithes in Catholic ages, recalls nothing but virtue, generosity, and acts of the purest benevolence; sometimes even it is associated with deeds of heroic devotion, the trophies of which reflect honor upon an entire nation, as in the instance of the letters of King Ranimirus, respecting the vow of the tenths, in consequence of the victory which abolished the infamous tribute of the Christian

\* S. Aviti. Epist. XXXVI. ~

† Sicilia Sacra, I. 34.

‡ Id. I. 264.

§ De Combust. Basil. Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 149.

|| II. 2. Qu. 87. Art. 1.

¶ S. Aviti Epist. Victorio Episcopo.

\*\* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris. tom. V. 163.

virgins, which are every year read publicly in the vulgar tongue in the church of Compostella.\*

The personal condition of the clergy in the middle ages, was not what is often supposed. King Ferdinand coming one day into the cathedral of Leon, heard the divine office, but saw the ministers of the church through poverty serving at the altar in bare feet, and immediately he left funds to supply them in future and ever after with shoes.† Churches were often supported by lands which had been given to them in distant provinces. Thus that of Paris, as early as in the sixth century, possessed estates not merely round the city, but also in the diocese of Sens. It had lands also in Provence to furnish oil for the lamps.‡ Theodoc, duke of Bavaria, in the seventh century, founded with his own funds the bishopric of Saltzbourg; and Robert Guiscard, and the other Norman princes, similarly made provision for episcopal sees in Sicily and Calabria. Orderic Vitalis relates that Giroie de Courserault, in the eleventh century, having obtained the lands of Helgon, demanded of the inhabitants to what bishop they belonged, and they assured him that they appertained to no bishop. Then he replied, "That is a great injustice: far from me the idea of living without a pastor, and exempt from the yoke of ecclesiastical discipline." Then, having inquired who was the most religious of the neighboring bishops, he subjected all his lands to the jurisdiction of Roger, bishop of Lisieux, and persuaded Baucri de Banquenoëi, Vauquelin du Pont-Echenfrei, and Roger de Merlerault, to subject similarly their estates, which had been equally independent.§ The clergy themselves, who often abandoned great possessions of their own, gave riches to the Church. Priests sometimes combined together for the purpose of maintaining the offices. Thus at Blois, the collegiate church of the Holy Saviour was founded within the first court of the castle by twelve secular priests, in the year 1000, who put all their goods in common, and made a fund, after building the church, sufficient to support twenty-eight canons.|| The Venerando Consorzio at Parma is a congregation of ninety-four priests, who serve the cathedral voluntarily, without deriving any thing from it. So far were they from being men whose only care it is to have their coffers filled.

The use of annats was most ancient in the Roman Church, and their origin and object were most just, for they were expended in the propagation and defence of the Christian religion; and, at the Council of Trent, no charge could be substantiated against them. Wadding has fully justified Rome against Mathieu Paris, who accuses the collections for the Holy See in England, and has clearly demonstrated the justice of that tribute.¶ It was in general thought that if the clergy had been dependent on casual bounty, and the liberality of the great, their influence could never have been preserved. John the Baptist would not have told Herod so boldly, "non licet," if he had been his pensioner. Daniel would never

\* Joan. Vasæi Brugensis Rer. Hispanic. Chronic. VII.

† Roderici Toletani de reb. Hispaniæ, Lib VI. 14. ‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocese de Paris. I.

§ Hist. Normand. Lib. III. || Bernier Hist. du Blois, 32. ¶ Annal. Minorum, tom. III. 185.

have ventured to decipher the fatal writing to Balthasar, if he had accepted the honors and riches which this prince had offered him. Restrained by no consideration, he spoke to him with boldness: "Be thy presents for thyself, O king, and bestow the gifts of thy house on another; but I am to read this writing to you, and to explain to you what it contains."

The origin of ecclesiastical exemptions and privileges must be traced to the love and veneration with which the clergy were regarded both by kings and people during the ages of faith. The praise bestowed upon the Marquis Boniface by Donizo, might have been extended, as we observed in the last book, to innumerable men in those days invested with power, who all, like the father of Mathilda, had their chaplains, who reverently sung before them the nocturnal and daily hours, and on whom they were ever contriving to confer some new favor.

'Pontifices sacros habuit quam maxime caros,  
Ipsis donabat, quæ censuit his fore grata.'\*

These privileges and honors are no doubt far from being in harmony with the views of men at the present day; but then it should be remarked, that the language of the moderns respecting the ministers of religion, indicates a total departure from all former traditions of mankind. The epithets "party of the priests," "people that are under the dominion of the priests," and other similar expressions, signify in fact nothing else but the descendants of the race of Seth, the generation of those who fear God. Isocrates commences his celebrated panegyric, by saying that he has often wondered why persons who excel in bodily exercises should be esteemed deserving of great gifts, while those who prepare the souls of men for assisting others, are neglected and left without honor; since the former cannot impart their strength to others, whereas all men can derive advantage from the mind of those who think wisely. Nevertheless, we have only to consult any of the fragments of the early philosophic writings, to be convinced, that during the primitive ages of the world men believed an extraordinary degree of respect to be due to those who sought to make others wise and just. It was the advice of Thales to Pythagoras, that he should apply to the priests of Egypt, for that he would become wiser and diviner than all other men if he passed his life with those priests.†

From the first age of Christianity, it was the custom to kneel down and kiss the feet of a bishop or priest, to receive his benediction; and it was deemed the greatest happiness to give lodging to a priest or deacon. "Respect forbids me to sit down before a priest," says St. Jerome, in his epistle to Heliodorus. From this custom of kneeling to the bishop, the pagans, indeed, imagined that the Christians adored the nature of a priest as that of a parent.‡ The primitive discipline, in this respect, was transmitted through the middle ages. Iona, in his laical institutes, shows the duty of honoring all priests, on account of their order,

\* Vita Mathild. Lib. I. c. 14.

† Jamblich de Pythagoric. Vit. 2.

‡ Minut. Felix, p. 333.



not on account of any accidental attendant on their persons ; and he says that the contrary fault can only arise from the negligence of priests, and from pride and ignorance in the laity.\* Charles of Blois would always descend from his horse to salute an ecclesiastic. “Devout men,” says Durandus, “kiss the anointed hands of a priest.”† By the canons of the council of Epaone, in the year 517, deacons had been forbidden to sit down in the presence of priests, and the same council desired that noblemen should come at Christmas and at Easter, to receive the benediction of the bishop. The council of Mâcon, in 585, prescribed the marks of honor which seculars ought to show to a clerk on meeting him, and the manner in which the clerk should reply to them. The devotion of the people made such regulations necessary.

Landulph, the old historian of Milan, speaking of the love evinced by the people for the clergy, says, that “there was no laic in the city, who did not, according to his ability, entertain every year, for the love of God, two, four, or twelve, or even more priests, attending to the precept, *qui vos recepit me recipit*, and that they might have a prophet’s reward, receiving them with the utmost humility and charity.”‡ “In England,” as Weever observes, “the priests were in such high and holy repute amongst the lay people, that when any of them were espied abroad, they would flock presently about him, and with all reverence humbly beseech his benisons, either by signing them with the cross, or in holy prayers for them.” “And further,” saith Bede, “it was the manner, in these primitive times, of the people of England, that when any of the clergy, or any priest, came to a village, they would all, by and by, at his calling, come together, to hear the word, and willingly hearken to such things as were said, and more willingly follow in works such things as they could hear and understand ; a wonderful order of piety both in priest and people.” The Saxon chronicle applies generally some eulogistic epithet to bishops. It is either, the benevolent bishop Athelwold, the father of monks, or the wise man ; or the innocent abbot Egbert ; or Cyneward the good, prelate of manners mild, or bishop Elfgar, the abundant giver of alms, or the blessed bishop Ernulf of Rochester. Similarly, in the old chronicles of Germany, the epithet *dulcissimus presbyter*, is applied to the first Catholic missionaries in the eighth century. The account given of the extraordinary veneration of the Spaniards for the clergy by so late a traveller as Bourgoign,§ would lead us to suppose that the manners of that people, in relation to the church, were, down to latter times, similar to those of our ancestors as described by Bede, which in fact were predominant in all parts of Christendom, during the middle ages. When St. Bernard was at Milan, and in other places of Lombardy, by reason of the multitude who came to see him, and to take his benediction, it was necessary for him to shut himself up, and to appear only at a window, and thence to give them his blessing. The empress waited on

\* De Institut. Laïc. Lib. II. cap. 20.    † Rationale.    ‡ *Midiolanens. Hist. Lib. II. c. 36.*  
§ *Tableau l’Espagne, vol. II. 325.*

St. Martin at table, and wherever he trod, or placed his hand, people used to kiss the spot. And what style of manners, think you, had this Martin, who had princes and people at his command? On one occasion, approaching the city of Arverna, when the senators were apprised of his coming, for this city then contained the flower of the Roman nobility, they all went out to meet him, with horses and chariots; but he, riding upon an ass, on which a coarse cloth had been thrown, and coming to the summit of the hill Belenater, which commanded a view of the village Rigomago, saw them advancing with all this pomp, and asked for what purpose they were thus coming, and being told that these were the senators of Arverna, who were coming to meet him, "It is not for me," he replied, "to enter their city with all this pomp," and turning his ass, he was about to ride in another direction, but they followed him, and implored him to enter their city, saying, "We have heard the fame of your sanctity, and we have many sick whom you should visit;" so he went with them. On this spot where the saint had stood, a chapel was afterwards built, which St. Gregory of Tours mentions.\*

Not even political animosities could prevail over the universal sentiment which prescribed veneration to the episcopal character. The citizens of Rheims suspecting that the archbishop, John de Craon, was inclined to favor the English, had obliged him to leave his castle, and reside in his palace within the city. The prelate shortly after commanded a procession to draw the mercy of God upon France: in the midst of the ceremony, one of the principal inhabitants, Robert Evrard, came forward to him, in the name of the whole city, saying, that they were grieved for having caused him displeasure, that it was not their intention to give him pain, and that they begged his forgiveness. The chief men of the city pressed round Evrard, to confirm what he had said with their respectful looks, while the rest of the people were on their knees. Then the archbishop, with great joy, declared that he pardoned them from his heart.† All this flowed from the general idea of the sacerdotal character predominant during the ages of faith, as expressed in the book of the imitation of Christ, "Great is the mystery and great the dignity of priests to whom is given what is not granted to the angels—the power of celebrating and consecrating the body of Christ. The priest clothed with the sacred vestments, was the representative of Christ, who humbly supplicated God for the people; he had before and behind him the signs of our Lord's cross, for a perpetual remembrance of the passion of Christ; before him he bore the cross, to show that he was to be diligent in following his footsteps, and behind him he bore it to indicate that he was to bear the injuries committed against himself by others for God's sake." The ecclesiastical exemptions may be traced from the earliest times. Artaxerxes commanded that no tax should be imposed upon the least ministers of the temple. Nevertheless, the personal immunities of the clergy were mere gifts from kings. The Gospel does not grant them any privilege.

\* Greg. Turen. Miracul. Lib. I. 5.

† Hist. de Rheims, Liv. III. 192.

Jesus Christ himself paid the tribute due to Cæsar ; and this was a personal obligation, for he had no property. Constantine exempted the clergy from personal tributes, in order that they might apply themselves exclusively to their functions ; but in granting them immunities, he made an exception in the case of their private patrimony, and it is curious to remark, that the edict in which this distinction occurs, was issued at the request of the Spanish, African, and Italian bishops.

These holy prelates deemed it just that the clergy should support the state with their own property, since they were protected in the enjoyment of it by the laws. Although St. Jerome and St. Augustin thought that the clergy should not retain their own patrimony, because they wished them to be as poor as the apostles, the canon laws both of the eastern and western churches allowed them to keep it. The exemptions granted by Constantine, were revoked by Julian, and restored by Valentinian. These were afterwards multiplied by Charlemagne, who gave great immunities to the clergy, as to their persons and property.\* In 1118, at the desire of Thibault, abbot of St. Maur-des-fosses, near Paris, king Louis le Gros published an ordinance which began thus, "Since according to the tenure of the holy laws, the royal power, in virtue of the duty imposed upon it, ought to attend above all things to the defence and honor of the churches, it is fit that those to whom so great power has been delegated by the hand of God, should provide with the most attentive solicitude for the peace and tranquillity of the churches, and that to the praise of Almighty God, by whom kings reign, they should honor the possessions of the church with some privilege, that they may thus acquit themselves of their kingly duty, and so receive indubitably the eternal remuneration ; let all men know, therefore, that Thibault, abbot of the monastery of St. Peter, has come into our presence to complain that the serfs of the holy church of his monastery are so despised by secular persons, that in the plaids and civil courts they will not receive their evidence against free men, and that the ecclesiastical serfs are not in any thing preferred to the lay serfs. Having heard the complaint of the church, being moved both by reason and affection, I have found it necessary to deliver this church, so dear to our person, from this scandal." In fact, under the privileges attached to the domains of the church, the rustics, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, acquired such riches and power, many of them possessing fiefs, that they gave alarm to some lay seignories, and even kings. It was Charlemagne who first exempted the clergy from being citable before the secular judges,† though modern English lawyers pretend that it was the clergy who, about the middle of the twelfth century, renounced all immediate subordination to the civil magistrate, openly pretending to an exemption.‡ Sir Matthew Hale even says, that Henry II. in the constitutions of

\* Thomassinus de Vet et Nova Discip. pars III. Lib. I. c. 36.

† Cap Carl. m. a 801. §. 39. f. 1. col. 355

‡ Notes to Sir M. Hale's Hist. of the Com. Law, p. 164.



Clarendon, "checked the pride and insolence of the pope and the clergy, restraining the exemptions they claimed from secular jurisdiction."

The age for such misrepresentations to pass current, is nearly at an end. "One is obliged to confess," says Michelet, "that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the twelfth century was an anchor of safety. It might spare some guilty persons, but how many innocent did it not save."†

Before the Church had fully changed the ancient customs of the Gentile world, the ecclesiastical privileges of asylum were of the utmost benefit. The Church, and a certain space round it, the bishop's palace, the presbytery house, the canonical buildings, the bell tower, the hospital for travellers, and for the sick, the cemetery, every monastery, and every priest, bearing the eucharist, furnished an asylum from which not even slaves could be torn.‡ The clerical exemptions were all in the interest of the poor. Thus the vassals of the bishopric of Evreux, had the privilege of being exempt from certain tolls which were paid throughout all France;§ and those of the Church of St. Cuthbert had exemptions from military service.

The justice which presided over the promotion of men, to the different degrees in the sacred hierarchy, was a remarkable feature in the character of the middle ages; distinguishing, indeed, at all times, the Catholic discipline, from that which has been opposed to the Church; for it was not merely in the age of Tertullian, that one beheld Heretics receiving all persons, and conferring hasty honors upon them, in order to bind by glory those whom they could not hold by truth; and could see verified by what he affirms, that no where are men promoted more easily than in the camps of the rebels; "ubi ipsum esse illic, promereri est."||

Observe the injunctions of Ives de Chartres, writing to Hugo, Archbishop of Lyons, respecting a young man not fit for the ecclesiastical state. "Ne in manus ejus committatur salus aliena qui nunquam adhuc deliberavit de salute sua;" in proof of which accusation, he sends him "One out of many songs, metrically and musically composed by him, which he, and other youths like himself, sing in the streets and squares of cities."¶

Mauger, son of Richard II. uncle of William the Conqueror, Archbishop of Rouen, could never obtain the pallium from Rome, being always refused it as unworthy

"It is not," says William of Poitiers, "that Mauger did not know how to read with a scientific eye the Holy Scriptures; but he did not know how to govern his life, and that of his dependents, after the rules which they impose."\*\*\*

The conscience of men ill qualified, often interposed to obviate the possibility of their promotion. In the year 1226, the canons of Rheims had given their votes for the election of Hugues de Pierre-Pont, to the archiepiscopal

\* P. 174.

† Hist de France, II. 393.

‡ Joan. devoti Instit. Can. Lib. II. tit. 8.

§ Hist d' Evreux II.

|| De Præscript. 41.

¶ Ivonis Carnot. Epist. LXVI.

\*\*\*Will. of Poitiers' Life of Will. the Conqueror.

throne. He was suspected of having long desired to obtain the dignity ; yet when the moment came, he began to have fear ; and he addressed himself to a holy abbot, asking his advice. After having had the modesty to consult the pious recluse, he had the courage to submit to his decision ; and Hugues, in consequence, refused the throne, which was offered him.\* We find John de Avila writing to a young man, who had doubts whether he ought to receive the priesthood ; and saying, "I commend your humility, and I love you the more for it." In times past, the most holy men often remained in the rank of deacons, or of the inferior degrees. In those times men had low degrees, and led very high lives.†

On the other hand, no obscurity of birth, or other circumstance of condition, was an obstacle to the elevation of men of merit to the highest dignity of the Church. By the canons of the council of Orleans in 549, as in many previous, it was decreed, that a serf once ordained, became for ever exempt from all service derogatory to the sacred ministry ; but the bishop who ordained the serf of a secular without his consent, was obliged to give two serfs in his place to the former lord. Chateaubriand remarks, "that two thirds of the riches of the Church were in the hands of the plebeian part of the clergy." Wondrous are the examples of men promoted to the highest places, solely through regard to the interests of the heavenly life. St. Celestin V. was drawn from a hermitage to be raised to the supreme chair. Pope Alexander V. was so poor in his youth, that he begged his bread from door to door. It was a Franciscan friar who first discovered his dispositions, and taught him Latin. On the death of a bishop, a fast of three days was observed, previous to the election of a successor, which was sometimes determined by a vision, or the counsel of a child.‡ In the year 1248, as the canons of Rouen were preparing to elect an archbishop on the Easter festivals, it was resolved that they should elect the person who should first come into the church to pray to God. At break of day, brother Odo Rigaut, a Franciscan friar of holy life, was going out to preach in the fields, and passing by the parvis of our lady, entered into the church, thinking only to say a short prayer in passing. The canons immediately came up, and embraced him, and confirmed his election.§

Denenulfus, Bishop of Winchester, had been to a late age, not only void of learning, but even a swine herd ; when king Alfred, yielding to the violence of the Danes, fled into the woods, and met him by accident tending the swine. Discovering his merit and ability, he directed him to be instructed in letters ; and such was his progress, that he finally was raised to the episcopal degree."||

Orderic Vitalis says, that during the fifty-six years that William governed Normandy and England, the manner of providing for the churches was this : when a pastor died, the prince sent delegates to the widowed see, to take an inventory of all the goods of the Church, lest they might suffer injury. Then the

\* Hist. de Rheims, Lib. III. 9. † Epist. LXI. ‡ Mabil. Præfat. in 1. Sæcul. Benedict, §. 9.

§ Taillepie, Recueil des Antiquités de Rouen, 192.

|| Will. Malmesb. de Gest. Pont. Anglor. Lib. II.

prelates, abbots, and other sage counsellors, being convoked, he took counsel of them to know who was the most proper person to set over the house of God, for things divine and secular. Then whoever had the pre-eminence in virtue and wisdom, was established chief of the see or abbey; and never was there any consideration of fortune, or power, but only of holiness and wisdom.\* He shows at great length the cause why the Normans found the English sunk so low, in regard to learning; whereas the Roman pontiffs had formerly subjected them to better institutions. The Anglo-Saxon clergy had before been profoundly imbued with both Greek and Latin erudition; but the long enduring ravages of the Danes in England, had overthrown the seats of learning, and dispersed the stones of the sanctuary. The monasteries being destroyed, the monastic discipline became relaxed; and the canonical discipline did not revive again, until the invasion of the Normans.† In these latter times, when the manners and discipline of the ages of faith, had given way before the influence of the modern governments, it was an archbishop who exclaimed, "May the sanctuary be laid desolate provided that hearts, those true sanctuaries, may be pure! Rather let us see every thing, than see again every thing that we see."‡

From all this it followed, that the bishops of the middle ages were not merely deserving curates to conduct a diocese like a parish, with views corresponding to a small locality; but besides, being men who had been trained in the needful rudiments, they were often great and magnanimous philosophers, to direct the spirit and manners of a whole nation. From the very circumstances of the mode of their election, they could not be the successive disciples of a particular school, to hand down from age to age, the jealous prejudices, and narrow conceptions of a party. The deposit of faith was all that they transmitted to successors; they were often learned monks, who had come from a distant land; devout, innocent pilgrims, possessing the wisdom of the serpent; men who could sympathize with all that was beautiful, and wise, and holy; greatly, and in a philosophical as well as in a theological sense, Catholic, and who often united in themselves every kind of intellectual interest, and grandeur. St. Sophias, or Cadocus of South Wales, the twenty-fourth bishop of Beneventum, had been a monk, and an abbot. Thrice had he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and seven times to Rome. At length, on account of his sanctity, this stranger was made bishop of Beneventum, where he obtained the crown of martyrdom, from the hands of the Arians, while celebrating mass in his cathedral. This was during the reign of Arthur, in Great Britain, whose deeds are recorded in a manuscript, still preserved in the archives of the monastery of St. Sophia.§

National prejudices were never suffered to oppose the promotion of men of merit in the Church, which was a common country for the people of every land. Thus

\* Hist. Normand. Lib. IV.

† Lib. IV.

‡ Fenelon pour la Fête d'un Martyr

§ Italia Sacra, tom. VII. 16.



in the eighth century, we find Prudence, a holy and learned Spaniard, Bishop of Troyes, in the fourth century, St. Zeno, an African, Bishop of Verona, in later times, St. Anselm, an Italian, born at Aost, Archbishop of Canterbury, and many Irishmen, bishops in Italy. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury, an Englishman, is Bishop of Chartres; the first Bishop of Arras was a Greek; and in a much later age Theodore, another Greek, was Archbishop of Canterbury. Mark the inscription on the tomb of Richard, Archbishop of Messina, in the cathedral of St. Nicholas, in that city, who died in 1196 :

"Anglia me genuit, instruxit Gallia, fovit  
Trinacris ; huic tandem corpus et ossa dedi."\*

Roderic Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo in 1208, an historian and philosopher, returning from Rome into Spain, having repaired to Pope Gregory IX. on occasion of a certain controversy, as he descended the Rhone died on board the vessel, and was buried in the monastery of Horta, in Arragon, on whose tomb might be read this ancient inscription :

"Mater Navarra, nutrix Castella,  
Schola Parisius, sedes Toletum,  
Hortus Mausoleum requies cœlum."

Gervais, bishop of Séz, in Normandy, was of a noble family, in Lincolnshire ; he had composed for himself an inscription, which is on his tomb :

"Anglia me genuit, nutrit Gallia ; sanctus  
Justus, Thenolium, Præmonstratumque dedere  
Abbatis nomen, sed mitram Sagia ; tumbam  
Hic locus, ore tur ut detur spiritus astris."†

The sixty-sixth bishop of that see, was James Saurez, a Portuguese ; Arthur Dillon, from Ireland, was a canon of Rouen in the sixteenth century. Robert, an Englishman, a holy and learned prelate, was the fifteenth bishop of Olmutz, in Moravia.

How anxiously the Church watched, to cut off all the advances of simony in every age, may be seen in the great work of Thomassinus.‡ From the year 1049, to 1071, there were five councils especially directed against simony, and investiture, which were synonymous. Speaking of this crime St. Peter Damian says, "that there are three kinds of gifts ; munus a manu, which was money ; munus ab obsequio, which was the obedience of subjection ; and munus a lingua, which was the gift of adulation."

Upon the coming in of William the Conqueror, Herebert became bishop of Thetford, by simoniacal agreement. This sin of his earlier life, was afterwards expiated by a life of penitence. Making a pilgrimage to Rome, he deposed his

\* Sicilia Sacra, tom. II. 400.

† Recherches Hist. sur le Diocèse de Séz.

‡ De Vet. et Nov. Eccles. Discip. Pars III. Lib. I. cap. 49—71.

pastoral staff and ring, but deserved to have them again presented to him. On his return he transferred his see to Norwich, where he established a great monastery ; he also founded another at Thetford. Thus he effaced the simoniacal crimes of his youth. His tears bore testimony to the sincerity of his words, saying, "*Male quidem intravi, confiteor, sed Dei gratia operante bene egrediar. Erravimus juvenes, emendemus senes.*"\*

Memorable, indeed, are the examples of the middle ages, respecting the horror with which the crime of simony was regarded. Who is this mysterious penitent in the desert of Fonte Avellano, that comes forth on Christmas Eve, to assist at the solemnity, after having been secluded in his cell during forty days ? One trembles on beholding him. This is he who in six days accomplishes the canonic penance of an hundred years. Hark ! to the clash of iron as he prostrates himself on the ground, for he wears a steel cuirass next his skin ; two iron rings encompass his body, and two press heavy on his arms and legs ; and yet with arms extended, long and fervently he prays, and makes a thousand genuflections, while reciting one Psalter. This is the celebrated Dominicus, surnamed *Loricatus*, who in the year 1059, put on this terrible vest. What drove him in the desert, was the thought that he had incurred the crime of simony in the year 1025, though it is very doubtful whether he really did partake in it or not. Such, however, is his impression ; and, therefore, he deems himself unworthy of ever again celebrating mass ; and as the gift of a vestment to a bishop was the cause of his crime, he punishes it in himself by wearing this sharp iron vestment, which he will never lay aside till his death.†

Whenever any abuse crept in, the complaints of the holy men of the middle ages are most affecting. Hear Richard of St. Victor commenting upon the words, "Beneath it dwell the animals and beasts, and in its branches converse the birds of heaven." "Thus," saith he, "the bestial spirits are kept down, but the spiritual are exalted. Let our prelates learn what they ought to do. Let them learn to depress undisciplined manners, and to raise and honor the good. What kind of monster is this, that trees should carry bears, or lions, or other bestial minds of this kind in their branches ? While the birds of heaven, and the winged tribe, contrary to the law of their condition, and to the institute of their Creator, are pressed down to the ground ? How often have I seen, and have groaned at seeing, the impious exalted and elevated above the cedars of Libanus. Ah ! if you truly love these bestial hearts, why so exalt them ? Why not spare them ? Why prepare their destruction by raising them to the branches whence they must so terribly fall ?"‡ When such sentiments prevailed among the inferior orders of the clergy, and among the people, there was less danger of the higher becoming forgetful of what their duty required. And accordingly Pope Urban II. in

\* Will. Malmesbur. de Gestis Pontif. Anglorum, Lib. II.

† Annalium Camaldulensium, Lib. XIV.

‡ Richardi S. Victoris de eruditione hominis interioris Lib. II. 17.

writing to the clergy and people of Chartres, with respect to the election which terminated in favor of Ives, who was raised to that see, expressly confides in this principle, desiring them to look to themselves, and adding, "Si enim placere Deo studueritis pastorem procul dubio Deo placentem habebitis."\*

Now that it devolves upon me to speak of the justice of the men themselves who composed this vast body, the organization of which we have been considering, I can fully appreciate the difficulty of my enterprize. Would that I could frame some feeling lines that might discover such integrity; but I fear, as Cicero says, "ne talium personarum, cum amplificare velim, minuam etiam gloriam,"† if it be lawful to use the Roman style in speaking of these modest and humble men, so free from all ambition, from that even of a legitimate glory. What do we find at the summit of this majestic hierarchy? The faith of Peter, the constancy of Cornelius, the felicity of Sylvester, the refinement of Damasus, the eloquence of Leo, the learning of Gelasius, the piety of Gregory, the magnanimity of Symmachus, the conciliatory talents of Adrian, the pacific temper of Eugene, the munificence, in regard to learning, of Nicholas, the sanctity of Pius V., the erudition of Benedict, the liberality of Pius VI., the goodness of Pius VII., the heroic justice of Leo XII., the divine light of Gregory, which hath so lately guided back to the Gospel those who were wandering after delusive fires, enticed from the way of the beatitudes by men like these described in the holy song, "Qui dixerunt: linguam nostram magnificabimus labia nostra a nobis sunt; quis est Dominus noster?"‡ "Never," says Stephen Pasquier, "did a history contain more religion and sanctity than that of the bishops of Rome, in the gradual acquisition of their temporal power."§ One may believe it truly, since the first thirty-six popes were saints, many of whom planted the church with their blood, and drank the Lord's chalice, all of whom were made the friends of God, their sound having gone forth into all lands, and their words to the ends of the earth; still it is well to hear it acknowledged by a writer distinguished for his political hostility to Rome. It is curious to hear Pontanus express his inability to explain by what arts the Roman pontiffs acquired that temporal power; "For it was not by arms," saith he, "that they vindicated it. They were men wholly devoted to peace and religion, arranging processions and ceremonies; men most innocent, and most removed from all ambition and excess. It is not easy to explain this history. We only behold their equal government, their tranquil administration, their study of peace, and that almost divine majesty of repose with which they are encompassed."|| Even amidst the evils which desolated Italy during the tenth century, Rome beheld the eighth Stephen, the seventh Leo, and the second Agopitus, pontiffs of admirable holiness and of blessed memory.¶ When Clement VIII. heard himself proclaimed pope, he prostrated himself on the earth, and prayed God to take away his life, if his

\* Ivonis Carnot. Epist. I. † Lucullus. ‡ Ps. II. § Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 4.

¶ Joan. Jovian. Pontani Hist. Neapolit. Lib. I. ¶ Mabill. Præfat. in V. Sæcul. Benedict.



election would not conduce to the advantage of the Church. He was so humble, that more than once he seated himself in the tribunal of penance, and received like a simple curate every one who chose to present himself. The chronicles of St. Bertin describes pope Adeodatus as a man of marvellous benignity, who used to dismiss every one that had come to him consoled.\*

John Picus of Mirandula begins his apology by saying, that he came lately to Rome, to kiss the feet of the chief pontiff, Innocent VIII., and though it was this pope who condemned some of his propositions, he adds, "to whom, on account of the innocence of his life, the name is most justly due."† Never was there wanting, at the moment of need, the force and discernment essential to him who was to rule as Christ's vicar, in order to steer the good vessel of the Church through all the gusts and tides of the world's mutability. And what think you, might be found to illustrate justice in the annals of the pontifical council? "If you will review the state of the Church for the last four hundred years," says Benedict Aretino, writing under Cosmo de Medicis, "I think you will acknowledge that there were not a few cardinals in holiness and learning most eminent; for without mentioning a Bonaventura, you must confess, that Bernard Uberto the Florentine, John Dominicus, Nicholas of Bologna, Francis Zabarello, Julian Cæsarino, Angelo Acciajuolo, Adimar the German, Blanda of Placentia, and Antonio Cajetan, were men who discharged that office with the highest praise and veneration, not one of whom, amidst all the state necessarily attending such a rank, was ever accused of vanity or insolence, for what in fact was more remote from them all!"‡ Marcelius Ficinus accordingly reminds cardinal Raphael Riario, that unless he would disgrace his office in the Roman church, his house must be a temple of God, a seat of prudence, justice, and fortitude, a fountain of charity and grace, a chair of the muses, an academy of orators and poets, a school of philosophers and theologians; it must furnish a table to the poor, a refuge to the innocent, an inheritance to the unhappy.§

Truly, for one, I can speak from personal experience, for I was at Rome when the sixteenth Gregory sat in Peter's chair, and if the testimony of an eye witness may be opposed to the scornful words of him who lately styles himself a believer, let the reader be assured, that his soul would have gathered lively virtue from beholding an assembly of the sacred college, which seemed to me the most august, majestic spectacle, that could be furnished by humanity, in harmony with its Creator's will. Youth which was solitary, or conversant with the poor, amidst its favorite haunts, had escaped from hearing the calumnies of men, and therefore there were no lurking, vile delusions to obscure the vision. I marked in that audience the impress of every noble spirit; I could distinguish the wisdom of a Justiniani, the gentleness and goodness of a Rohan, the dignity

\* Chronic. Monast. S. Bertini, cap. I. pars VI. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. tom. III.

† Joan. Picus Mirandula Apologia.

‡ De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog.

§ Epist. Lib. V.

and Platonic majesty of a Micara, the unsated thirst of an Odeschalchi, the frankness and manly sincerity of a Zurla, and the unaffected humility of him who once ruled the towers of Lullworth. There was in one whose name is dear to Genoa, the air of a Gregory of Tours, in another the penetration of a Jerome, in another the simplicity of a Fenelon. The spectacle did attract my soul's regard, and enable me to discover new beauties in history, and to feel the grandeur and tenderness of many scenes, the description of which may seem a rhetorical exaggeration, if one has not, from experience, an internal sense responsive to the writer's words. For now I can understand how the presence of Pope Gregory IX., could cause brother Gilles, the devout contemplatist, to fall into one of his usual ecstasies; now I can understand the majesty of that scene presented in the synod which was held at Rome in the year 1083, when the holy fathers spoke for three days on the weal and woe of the Church, which was so troubled at the time that many bishops were prevented from attending. On the third day, when the holy pope, who was the seventh Gregory, entered, his appearance and discourse were so divine, that almost the whole of that venerable assembly was moved to tears. Of the strength of mind and constancy necessary to meet the present pressure, speaking with a tongue not human but angelic, "the whole audience," says the historian, "broke forth in groans and weeping."\* We have a description by Orderic Vitalis of the spectacle furnished at the council of Rheims, and now I can appreciate the justice of his impressions respecting it. After relating that at the end of the cathedral facing the great gate, was placed the apostolic chair, on which sat Calixtus; that before him were the cardinals; that opposite the Rood were placed the chairs of the bishops, and that each metropolitan took his place according to the antiquity of his see,—that you beheld there Raoul of Rheims, Leotheric of Bourges, Humbert of Lyons, Goisfred of Rouen, Turstin of York, Daimbert of Sens, Hildebert of Mans, Baudri of Dole, and eight other archbishops with their suffragans, and the deputies of the absent, as also a great number of abbots, monks, and clerks,—the historian adds that this august assembly gave, by anticipation, an idea of the last judgment, which Isaiah beheld in spirit, and cried, "the Lord will come to judge with the old men, and the princes of the people."†

Bending our view lower, we are presented with the same images of living justice. Read the work of William of Malmesbury, on the lives of the bishops of England in Catholic times, or the similar work of the venerable Bede, and then judge whether that highest justice which consists in following the apostolic steps, after the injunctions of our Lord, was found wanting during the middle ages. The description of the life and manners of a Maphœus Gherardus, patriarch of Venice, by Petrus, Delphinus, of Camaldoli,‡ will show, that in times long sub-

\* Colet. Coll. Conc. t. XI. 676.

† Hist. Norman. Lib. XII.

‡ Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LXVIII.

sequent, amidst circumstances so unfavorable as those which characterized the end of the fifteenth century, the same type continued to be realized; so that wherever religion remained unchanged, there was still found the same order of men discharging the episcopal office; not such as would speak, in the assemblies of peers, of their attainment of a mitre, as evidence of their own success in life: their views of such elevation may be collected from that Hydulphus, of whom the chronicle says, on his being made archbishop of Treves, "*Potius est tractus quam electus.*"\*

Thomas Bradwardine, the learned and holy archbishop of Canterbury, so deep a divine, that at Oxford he was called "*Doctor Profundus*," so great a mathematician, and philosopher, and general scholar, in all the liberal sciences, that he was the admiration of his age; though confessor to Edward III., and with him constantly in all his wars, from whom he might have had many preferments, was so far from wishing to succeed by honors, that it was long before he could be persuaded to fill a prebendal stall in Lincoln. In the year 1107, Vulgrin, disciple of Ives de Chartres, fled from Troyes, when he found that Pope Pascal II., there presiding in council, was willing to give him up to the inhabitants of Dole, who sought him, to fill the episcopal see of their city.† Pythagoras, who never admitted any one to his friendship, whom he had not seen to be a despiser of honors, during three years of probation,‡ would have found no deficiency of subjects duly qualified for his esteem, in this respect, had the different ranks of the Catholic hierarchy been presented. He at least would have been satisfied with such evidence as that to which the cardinal of Winchester appeals in his reply to proud Gloucester; "*If I were covetous, perverse, ambitious, as he will have me, how am I so poor? Or how haps it, I seek not to advance or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?*"

The spirit of these ages is expressed in remarkable terms by Parisius, a monk of Camaldoli, in the thirteenth century, whose sentence is found recorded in the necrology of the convent of St. Christina at Bologna. "*He who wishes to be chosen,*" says this holy man, "*is not chosen by the Lord; for he saith, I have chosen you. Let no one, therefore, endeavor to obtain his own election. The Lord chose David, whom his father Isai despised or neglected, because my ways are not as thy ways, saith the Lord. Woe then to those who seek to be chosen.*"§

Again we must observe, that they bore no resemblance to those Arian bishops, of whom St. Jerome says, "*From the bosom of Plato, or of Aristophanes, they are raised to the episcopacy, not differing from Gentiles, so that a Church which receives bishops from the heretics, does not so much receive bishops as priests from the capitol.*"|| The Irish synod, in the eighth century, whose decrees were published by Dacherius, says, "*He who is to be ordained a bishop, must pre-*

\* Chronic. Senoniensis, Lib. I. cap. XI. apud. Dacher. Spicileg. III.

† Hist. du Diocese de Troyes, 272.

‡ Jamblich de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 17.

§ Annal. Camaldul, Lib. XXXIV.

|| S. Hieron advers. Luciferianos.



viously be examined in order to ascertain whether he is prudent by nature, docile, temperate in his manners, sober, chaste, affable to the humble, merciful, learned, instructed in the law of the Lord, cautious in the interpretation of the Scriptures,"\* without once alluding to the accomplishments which the world would require for those whom it invested with pre-eminence.

At the council of Rheims, where Pope Calixtus II. presided ; on the first day, being Sunday, after the Pope had preached on the Gospel, the cardinal, bishop of Palestrine, made a discourse on the obligations of the Episcopal office, and proposed as an example, Jacob guarding the flocks of Laban ; who said, "I was pierced with heat during the day, and with cold during the night ; and sleep fled from my eyes ; thy sheep and thy goats have not been sterile ; I have not eaten the rams of thy flock."

The verses which the ancient historian of Ely addresses to the blessed Adelwold, express the episcopal character, as it appears in the history of the middle ages.

" O decus Ecclesiæ, vas nobile philosophiæ !  
Cujus ad exemplum Christi fies homo templum,  
Vir pie, sancte; bone pater, Adelwolde Patrone  
Inter opes seculi sitiebas gaudia cæli."†

Anquetil, in his history of Rheims, speaking of the archbishops of that see, boasts of having recalled to the memory of men, the merit too little known of Vulfar, the capacity of Foulques, the justice of Hervé, the piety of Courtenai, the sweetness and affability of Ursins, the liberality of Briçonnet, the ability of Gervais, of Guy Paré, of Albert de Humbert, and the truly episcopal qualities of Guillaume de Trie, of Robert de Lenoncourt, and of Guillaume Giffort.‡ He says, that many were models of holiness, of wisdom, and goodness, in difficult times.

In early ages, St. Remi, and St. Rigobert, the one insensible to the delights of a court which sought to please him, the other superior to the persecutions of an angry conqueror, showed in arduous circumstances, how the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to act in prosperity and misfortune. St. Camélien, bishop of Troyes, successor of St. Loup, in the year 507, assisted at the council of Lyons, where Sidonius saw him, who thus describes him in his epistles.§ "Of a truth, he is such a holy man, that he seems to have brought to life again, in his own manners and conversation, the Bishop of St. Loup, his master, so deservedly esteemed the first of all the prelates of Gaul, then living. O what gravity and sweetness were united in this holy man ! He loves learning ; but above all, that learning which has regard to piety and the Catholic religion. In all his actions and intentions, it is Jesus Christ that we behold and hear. He loves to oblige rather than to be repaid with gratitude ; so humble is he that in all places, and to all men, he wishes to yield place ; and his admonitions are given with such grace and delicacy, that

\* Capitula selecta Hibernens. cap. 7. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. IX.

† Hist. Eliensis, Lib. I. c. 6. apud Gale Hist. Brit. tom. III. ‡ L. XXII. § Lib. VII. 13.

no one is offended or wounded ; and all are equally satisfied with his counsels."

In order to ascertain how far the true episcopal type corresponded with their characters, the bishops of past times used to interrogate themselves after the manner of St. Augustin on the anniversary of his consecration, inquiring whether disturbed by various cares and difficulties, they had not heard any one, as he desired, or beheld any one with a displeased countenance, or uttered a severer word, or had afflicted any one in trouble or poverty, by an inconsiderate reply, or had neglected relieving any one in want, or discouraged him by their brow, or had been angry against any one through false suspicion.\* Mark now the details given by ancient authors, respecting St. Edmund of Canterbury ; for his later biographers pass over many things which though minute, are not less remarkable. It was his custom every day and night, to meditate upon the passion of Christ. While treasurer of the Church of Salisbury, he was so bountiful to the poor, that for a part of the year, he used to repair to a monastery of Stanley, from wanting means to live. The abbot, Stephen de Laxiton, a venerable man, used to advise him to be more prudent ; but he replied, "I wish to show that theologians are not the avaricious men that calumnious persons report them to be ; and I wish to entertain courtiers and secular men that I may gain them to God." He was never angry during his whole life but once ; and that was on his journey from Paris to England, when his companion, through negligence, lost the Bible with which he had entrusted him ; and then he quickly recovered his tranquillity. He had always an ivory image of the Blessed Virgin before his face, upon the desk which supported his book, at study, with these words inscribed, "A child is born unto us."

When the monks of Canterbury came to Salisbury to signify to him his election, he refused for three days, and at last complied, when told by the bishop of Salisbury that he would sin mortally if he did not suffer himself to be elected. When primate of England, he rather feared the burden than felt pride from the dignity ; on a journey he would hear the confession of the poorest man that applied to him ; he used to pass whole nights in prayer and meditation without sleep. He always honored and worshipped the female sex, on account of the Blessed Virgin, and its devotion ; he used to give portions to poor young women, to enable them to be married well. The law and custom of the land adjudged to him the manor of a certain knight which was to be redeemed afterwards for a sum of eighty pounds sterling, which sum as soon as he received, he gave to be divided among the four daughters of the knight, that there might be no delay to their marriage. There was another custom of the land which ordained, that when the father of a family died, his lord was to receive the best animal that he possessed, of whatever kind it might be, in token of his being the lord. A certain widow came to him, entreating that he would restore her draught horse ; to whom he replied,

\* Serm. de propr. Natali.

“Good woman, this is the law of the land, and the custom requires that your deceased husband’s lord should have his best animal.” Then turning to others, he said in Latin, “*Veraciter hæc institutio legis est diabolicæ, non divinæ.*” “After the captive has lost her husband, the best thing that her dying husband has left her, must be taken from her ; this is not a good custom.” Then turning to the woman, he said to her in English, “Woman, if I should lend your anima to you, will you take good care of it ?” “Yes, my lord, as much care as if it were my own.” Then he ordered his bailiff to restore it without delay. He saw the blessed Thomas of Canterbury in a vision, and tried to kiss his feet. Being obliged to fly from England, for maintaining the rights of the Church, he took refuge in the abbey of Pontigny, the general asylum for English exiles, on account of the sanctity of its superiors. And he was glad to be banished to the same country which had received St. Thomas of Canterbury, and Stephen Langton, his predecessors. Here he fell sick, and when he could no longer repair to the gate of the monastery, to give alms to the poor, he gave money to his chaplain, and charged him to discharge this office with all charity, and prudent discernment. Having received the adorable eucharist, he caused the cross, with the images of the Blessed Mary and St. John, to be placed before his eyes, which receiving, he kissed it, shedding many tears. Then causing wine and water to be brought to him, he washed the wounds of the nails, and of the lance, and then signing it with the cross, he drank that ablution, saying, “*Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus salvatoris.*” All present admired the expression of his face, which reflected the joy of his mind. To the physician who felt his pulse, saying, “It was very weak,” he replied, “that he was ready for his journey, being fortified after the manner of Catholics.” Then he ordered the tapers, and all things requisite for his obsequies, to be prepared ; he breathed no sigh, and evinced no symptom of death ; but sat or lay clothed on his bed, with his head reclining on his hand. At length, at sunrise, on the Friday, the day on which Christ tasted death for the dead, he slept the sleep of peace, without any previous struggle, and passed from the miseries of men to the joy of angels. His body was buried in solemn state in the monastery of Pontigny, in Champagne, which is on the road about half way between Rome and St. James, a house which no one devout to God ever passes near without visiting, and, therefore, the fame of his sanctity was spread through all lands.\*

During the middle ages, innumerable prelates imparted to different cities and dioceses, that charm which the memory of Fenelon has been able in latter times, to associate with the name of France, which though desolate and stript of most memorials, is still embalmed with the fragrance of his virtues. Such in the thirteenth century was Eberhart II. archbishop of Salzburg, called by the people, the father of the poor, the lover of peace.† The terms with which Alcuin begins

\* Vita ejus apud Martene Thesaurus Anecd. tom. III.

† Germania Sacra, tom. II. 343.



his letter to Arno, archbishop of Salzburg, indicate how faithfully he discharged the duties of his office. "*Aquilæ per Alpes volanti, per campos currenti, per urbes ambulanti, humilis terrigena salutem.*"\*

"Blessed be God," cries Ives de Chartres, writing to Thomas, archbishop of York, "who hath made your conversation to shine forth in the darkness of a barbarous nation."†

When Petrarch was at Prague, he formed a union with two prelates of distinguished merit, Ernest de Pardowitz, archbishop of that see, and John Oesko, bishop of Olmutz. Ernest used to say to him sometimes, "Friend, I am concerned to see you among barbarians." "Nothing, however," says Petrarch, "was less barbarous than these prelates. They were as gentle, polite, and affable, as if they had been born at Athens." Hear how he speaks of the Bishop of Lember, on reading his letter to the Cardinal of Colonna. "Every line of it breathes modesty, the love of moderation, freedom from ambition, and contentment with his lot. In it are the principles of the soundest philosophy, expressed in the most noble and exact manner." What a love of justice, and what solid virtue shone forth in that illustrious Ives, bishop of Chartres, whose *Epistles* and *Decretals* throw such light upon the contemporaneous history. Ives was not a courtly prelate. "If I did not thank you sooner," says he, to Samson, bishop of Worcester, who had sent him a present, "it was because I am a slow man, of few words, and of not sufficient urbanity; but I am not slow to repay your kindness with deeds."‡

This picture is unlike the preceding, but the saintly character admitted of infinite variety in the reception and employment of graces; and so clearly was this seen in history, that it may be supposed the church alludes to it when she sings "Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God. There was not found the like to him, who kept the law of the Most High." It may be remarked, that frequent writers, the most hostile to the Catholic hierarchy, have been compelled to speak in admiration of its justice. "The order of bishops in this kingdom," says Swinburn, "leads a very exemplary life, much retired from the world, expending their great revenues in feeding the poor, building and endowing churches, convents, and hospitals, and allowing very scantily for their own expenses."§ Bourgoign gives a similar description of the manner in which the prelates of Spain employed their power and wealth, when speaking of the Cardinal Lozenzana, archbishop of Toledo.|| On the road from Madrid to Saragossa, he finds a village built by the Bishop of Signenza, on which occasion he observes, that "everywhere in Spain, the bishops are at the head of the benefactors of their respective cantons."¶

Don Lewis de Armundarez, of a noble family in Navarre, abbot, bishop, and finally archbishop of Taragona, after all his promotions, died so poor, that his

\* *Id.* tom. II. 118.

† *Ivonis Carnot Epist.* CCXV.

‡ *Epist.* CCVII

§ *Travels through Spain*, 1775, vol. 1. p. 125.

|| *Tableau de l'Espagne*, vol. III. 4.

¶ *Id.* III. 31.

sepulchre in the monastery of Val-Parayso, could only be erected with the alms of the faithful. So bountiful was he to the poor, as St. Bernard says, “inter aurum sine auro pertransiit.”\*

Bishops frequently employed the wealth of the Church in works of secular utility. Fortunatus, himself a bishop, celebrates in verse the praise of Felix, a bishop, who cut down mountains, filled up valleys, banked out rivers, and drained extensive regions,† and Cassiodorus exhorts Æmilian, a bishop, to put the finishing hand to a vast aqueduct which he had begun, that, like another Moses, he might give water to the fainting people.‡

It was Bishop Crispus, in the reign of Severus, who built the first stone bridge over the Tessin at Pavia, and raised the river's banks to preserve the lands from inundation.§ The writers of the middle age, say that the bishop was the eye of all the land. Olaus Magnus relates that John Magnus, archbishop of Upsal, his brother and predecessor, when visiting his diocese, having purchased at his own expense instruments, gave them to the people, and taught them, by persons who were skilled in the art, the mode of procuring salt, by which he conferred a benefit upon the inhabitants of the north for ever.|| The names of Catholic bishops are still associated on the tongues of the people with various great works relating to the drainage of the fens in the eastern counties of England. It was Humbert, archbishop of Lyons, who constructed the stone bridge lined with houses over the Saone in that city, being himself the architect and chief contributor.¶

When the Sarrassins had destroyed the city of Frejus, in Provence, in the tenth century, it was Riculphe, the bishop of that see, whom thirty years after, heaven raised up to rebuild it, which he did at his own expense, in the gothic durable style, as we find it at the present day.\*\*.

What holy men were those powerful lords, the bishops of Nantes, jealous of the rights of their see, but also jealous of the public liberty. Nantes still venerates the memory of St. Felix, one of her earliest bishops, who dug the canal which yet bears his name, and made a fine navigable river of the Erdre, which was then stagnant, spreading into a pestilential marsh. Guillaume de Champagne, archbishop of Rheims in 1179, re-established the popular office of sheriff in that city. His charter began as follows: “As the princes of the earth, in preserving the rights and liberties of their subjects, acquire the love of God and of their people, and similarly by violating and changing ancient customs, expose themselves to incur the anger of God and to lose the confidence of their subjects, therefore, dear children and faithful citizens, we restore you to possession of the privileges which were granted to you in ancient times,

\* Notitiæ Abbat. Ord. Cisterciens. Lib. VI. 8. † Poem, III. ‡ Leg. IV, Ep. 31.

§ Bernard. Sacci Hist. Ticinensis, Lib. VI. c. 9.

|| Olai Magni Gentium septent. Hist. Lib. XIII. c. 6.

¶ Paradin. Hist. de Lyon, Lib. II. 33.

\*\* Hist. de Frejus, Lib. II.

and which the changes introduced by some of your lords have not been able utterly to abolish." In like manner, the Archbishop Renaud de Chartres conferred the most eminent favors on the people of Rheims.\* Speaking of the bishop of Beauvais, Ives de Chartres says, "whose simplicity has this laudable character, that it can either please those who are perversely, nor displease those who are rightly wise.† The *φρενῶν ἐπίσκοπον* had the wisdom of the serpent and the gentleness of the dove. In fact, the manners of these men of power and magnificence were characterized by the utmost meekness. Ives de Chartres always styles himself "the humble minister of the church of Chartres." On one occasion, when St. Frances de Sales came to Lyons, the two courts of France and Savoy being in that city, and persons of the highest dignity being ambitious of entertaining him, the holy bishop would accept of no other lodging but the gardener's room of the Convent of the Visitation. St. Ambrose, as we learn from St. Augustin's Confessions, used to receive every one who came to see him, and admit them without any announcement into his private chamber. Bishop Theodotus used to give the litter to his clerk, and mount himself upon horseback ;‡ and we had occasion to remark before that in the fourth century, St. Martin, bishop of Tours, made the visitation of his diocese mounted on an ass. It is recorded of the apostle of Ireland that, until his fifty-fifth year, when he was advanced to the episcopal degree, he used always to travel on foot, but that afterwards he used a chariot, after the manner of the country, and that over his other garments he wore a white cowl.

Many persons at present would be not a little amazed, I suspect, if they could be shown what sort of personage was a Catholic archbishop of Canterbury. Here then is one, who flourished in the thirteenth century, when that see was invested with all the power and pomp that kings and people could confer upon it. The name of this ecclesiastical potentate is John Peccham. As a Franciscan friar he had travelled over many parts of Europe on foot. He went from England to Padua, to the general assembly of his order, and returned, without having once a horse or carriage of any description. It was contrary to the wish of his heart, and only out of holy obedience, when the mitre was placed on his head ; and so little have his manners been affected by his new dignity, that you can often see him still discharging the lowest offices with simplicity, and even employed in lighting the wax-tapers of his own church. You are pleased, perhaps, with his humility, but you will add, that learning and high intellectual qualities are still more essential in such a station. Well, reader, you find them also in this archbishop, who is the most learned man of his age. When at Rome, teaching theology in the sacred palace, such was the opinion of his wisdom, that men of the highest order came to hear him ; and when he used to pass through the school,

\* Hist. de Rheims, Lib. II. 222.

† Ivonis Carnot. Decret Epist. III.

‡ Sophron, Prat. Spirit. 33.



bishops and cardinals used to rise up and uncover, and stand bare-headed before him ; though when he continued to teach after his election to the see of Canterbury, no one of the cardinals then used to move, because formerly they said, they showed that honor to his virtue, in which they felt themselves his inferiors, but then it would seem as if they paid it to his dignity, in which they were superior. But neither learning, nor humility, you continue, can compensate for the neglect of the poor, and an indifference to the interests of the people. Little do you know these men, if you imagine that such charges apply to them. This great theologian and philosopher is a lover of the poor, and often their companion ; he clothes them, feeds them, waits upon them, and washes their feet. He rises hungry and thirsty from the episcopal board, at which others have had a joyful feast. His palaces are open to the stranger and the destitute, but he loves only the house of God, and the place where his glory dwelleth. In the age of feudal severity he writes against Earl Warren, in behalf of the poor people, whose corn is trampled on by the deer and stags from his woods, without their daring to preserve it. Of all abuses he is the zealous reformer. Severity of government, immoderate exactions, multiplicity of forensic altercations, neglect of preaching in the episcopal order, and immorality of manners, he denounces and opposes with prudence and efficacy.\* How few of the moderns are aware that this was the general type of the episcopal character in the middle ages, when the bishop's throne was established in justice and his seat in equity.

The heroic spirit of the middle ages, which induced so often the chief to choose the part of an inferior, when it furnished an opportunity for showing great devotion, appears in the conduct of the men who governed the church. "Passing by Carcassonne," says a pilgrim clerk, "having demanded an audience of the bishop, I was told that he was gone to a village at a distance, to visit and console the inhabitants, who were attacked by the plague." But it would be endless to multiply these details. In conclusion, as we always close our survey by a visit to the tombs, among which it is so often sweet to stray, we can read a few of the ancient epitaphs which describe the pontiffs of the middle age. On the sepulchre of St. Andreas, bishop of Fundana, which is in the church of Cajetana, we find these lines :

"Pande tuas, paradise, fores, sedemque beatam :  
 Andreæ meritum suscipe Pontificis.  
 Custos justitiæ, doctrinæ, et pacis amator,  
 Quem vocat ad summum vita beata bonum.  
 Plenus amore Dei nescivit vivere mundo,  
 At famulo Christi gloria Christus erat.  
 Quem meditata fides et credita semper inhæsit,  
 Hæc te usque ad cœlos et super astra tulit.  
 Nunquam de manibus sibi lex divina recessit:  
 Elogium Domini vixit in ore suo.†

\* Wadding. *Annal. Minorum*, V.

† *Italia Sacra*, tom. I. 721.

Read next the epitaph of Ugolinus Malabranca Urbevetanus, an Augustinian, and bishop of Rimini, who died in 1374, a man of profound erudition.

“Carior est veterum virtus, doctrinaque, mores :  
(Heu, ubi prisca fides! lugemere illa solet.)  
Virtuti rectæ veteri Urbevetanus adhæsit,  
Urbevetus, studiis, indole, more, vetus.”\*

Pyrrhus Aloysius Castellomata fell a victim to the disease which swept away the people of his diocese in 1656, and on his tomb in his cathedral we read,

“Majus amoris opus nullum est, quam ponere vitam  
Pro grege, pro patria, religione, fide.”†

Adelard, bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths, before the year 1000, was buried in the cathedral which he had built there, on which was this inscription :

“Vitæ præsentis bona qui labentia sentis,  
Ad cœli sedem currito, coge pedem.  
Templum fundavi tamen hoc, et sic decoravi,  
Curavique Deo posse placere meo.”‡

A bishop of Salzburg is thus described by Alcuin, who composed the inscription on his tomb :

“Judicium promat justum tua lingua, sacerdos,  
Ut Christo placeat quicquid in ore sonat.  
Ore sonet Christi laudes, et vera loquatur,  
Et totum redolet pectus amore Dei.”§

But without wandering so far, let us only enter the cathedrals of Winchester and Canterbury, and behold the silent and half-ruined sepulchres of the pontiffs and abbots of the middle ages, and then, indeed, he must be a good orator who shall be able, by any fluent discourse, to counteract the impression of these mute stones, and convince us that these were not the men whom the Lord crowned at the gates of Paradise and invested with a stole of imperishable glory.

Such, then, was the type of the episcopal character so often reduced to practice by great and humble Christians during the ages of faith. What has antiquity to produce comparable to such characters? I do not ask what have the modern disciplines, because their fairest images partake of justice only in proportion to the affinity between them and the Catholic standard, as their own historian would lead us to conclude. “The bishops,” saith Burnet, “generally grew haughty and neglected their functions: some few that were stricter and more learned, did lean grossly to popery.”

Abuse and scandal must of necessity come, though infinite justice has declared that inexcusable are those through whom they come. Men talk of unmasking

\* Italia Sacra, tom. I. 428. † Id. tom. VIII. 238. ‡ Id. VIII. 347. § Mabillon, Vet. Analect.

priests, as if any persons had been more loud in censure of all vices in priests, than priests themselves, or than those whom priests have canonized, as may be witnessed in the third book of St. Catherine of Sienna. The clergy by all kinds of monuments chose to perpetuate the memory of sins within their own order, that future pastors might be warned never to forsake justice. What mean these four images of canons standing against two pillars outside the chancel of the cathedral of Evreux, on the side of the cemetery, three of which are hooded in the usual manner, while the fourth stands apart, bare-headed, and holding his hand on his breast, in sign of penitence? Tradition informs us that this man having fallen into heresy, had been interdicted by the chapter, but having abjured his error, and being re-established in all his honors, it was still required by the chapter that these statues should remain where the church was rebuilt by Henry the first, king of England, and Ouen, bishop of Evreux.\* Hear how St. Augustin speaks in his epistle to Felicia: "I conjure you, then, be not troubled to excess by these scandals of which you are a witness, which have been expressly predicted by our Lord, in order that when they arrived, we should remember that they have been foretold, and that our confidence should not be shaken. Offences must come. What are men but beings who seek their own convenience, and not what belongs to Jesus Christ? Among those who occupy the pastoral chairs, if there are some who seek only the interests of their flocks, there are also others who desire only temporal honors and the advantages of time. It must needs be that till the consummation of ages, these two classes of pastors should be perpetuated even in the bosom of the Catholic church. In fact, if in the apostle's time there were Christians who deserved the title of false brethren, and whose fatal blindness the apostle had to deplore, if he supported them nevertheless with patience, instead of cutting them off with severity, how much more probable is it that there should be similar men in these days, since our Lord said, in allusion to the latter times, that iniquity would abound, and that the charity of the greatest number would wax cold? but what follows should console us, since he adds, 'but he that shall persevere unto the end shall be saved.' There are good and wicked men among the pastors, as there are good and wicked men among their flocks. Now hear what the Scripture saith of these wicked pastors: 'They are seated on the chair of Moses. Do what they say, but take heed how you imitate their works, for they say and do not.'

"In conformity with this advice, the sheep of Jesus Christ hear his voice even by the mouth of evil pastors, and do not abandon unity, because the good which they hear them utter is not of their own but of God. Behold, then, how these same sheep may still feed in safety, because even under bad pastors, they can nourish themselves with the pastures of Jesus Christ. St. Paul, though he invites the faithful to become his imitators, yet severely blames those who wish to avail them-

\* Hist. d'Evreux, II.



selves of the name of apostles, in order to introduce divisions into the church, and who say, I am a disciple of Paul. Is it Paul, then, who has been crucified for you? Is it in the name of Paul that you have been baptized? From this we learn that good pastors are those who do not seek themselves but Jesus Christ; and also that the good sheep, while they apply themselves to imitate the virtues of their pastors, do not place their hopes in these same pastors, whose ministry is confined to the task of reuniting them all in one flock, but in Jesus Christ, by whose blood they have been redeemed. So that if, by chance, they meet with bad pastors who preach the doctrines of Christ, and who do their own works, they then practise what they say, and do not what they do, and they do not forsake the pastures of truth because of these children of corruption. For be it repeated once more, in the Catholic Church, which is not confined to a corner of Africa like that of the Donatists, but which is spread throughout the universe, and which increases and bears fruit according to the promise of our Divine Master, there are good and bad. As for those who are separated, as long as they are in opposition to her, they cannot be good. In vain will the works of some appear to bear testimony to their virtue: they are bad at least on account of their separation, since the Lord has said, he who is not with me is against me."

The motive of kings and princes in conferring dukedoms and baronies upon bishops, was partly in order to enhance their dignity in the eyes of the barbarians who were but newly, and often at first but partially converted to the faith. Thus we read of Canute, "observing how little veneration a rude people would have for bishops, lest the possession of such a title should be left among private men, he imparted to them, by decree, a share in the civil judicial power, and made them dukes and nobles."\*

By the ancient emperors of Germany it was a prescription that, on all solemn feasts of Mayence, the archbishop of that see should be seated on the emperor's right hand, and the abbot of Fulda on his left.† It is true that such honor could intrinsically confer but little upon those to whom the Lord made a covenant of peace, who by Him were made princes, that the dignity of priesthood should be to them for ever. Nevertheless this policy was well intended, and, under general circumstances, calculated to produce excellent fruits of justice. Incidentally, however, it led to great abuse. It was well that the highest nobles should come forward to honor the entry of the chief pastor of their diocese; but when in compensation for such homage, they could like the proprietors of the lands and dependencies of De Thuisy, seneschals of Rheims, claim a right to reside in the episcopal palace during the residence of the bishop, and keep with them three horses, three dogs, and three hawks, and all at the expense of the archbishop, the evil bore no proportion to the advantage arising from a nobleman holding a bridle during a procession, or serving the first dish at a banquet. But this was not all; for to the possession of

\* Baron. An 1081, n. 37.

† Chron. Slavov. Lib. III. cap. 9.

feudal domains must be traced those warlike measures which certain bishops felt themselves under the necessity of adopting in conformity with what was required by the feudal law. The pious abbot Ermoldo Nigello, forced to take arms in spite of his habit, boasts, indeed, of not having wounded any one, and carried a proof of it upon his shield.

"Hoc egomet scutum humeris ensemque revinctum

Gessi, sed nemo me feriente dolet.

Peppin hæc aspiciens risit, miratus—"\*

Gozlin, bishop of Paris, during the siege by the Normans, in the year 885, from his rank and birth, had the greatest authority in the city. Five years before Louis the Third had confided to him the care of the kingdom. He is styled by Abbon, the monk of St. Germain, in his poem on the Siege of Paris, "*Præsul Domini et dulcissimus heros.*"† Yet his warlike office seems to have been chiefly exercised in raising fortifications, sending for assistance, conducting treaties and organizing the material means for defending his country. In other respects, he is said by Abbon, to have nourished his flock as a benign pastor.‡

The moderns, however, have not the merit of having been the first to discover that such intermixture of contradictory characters was scandalous and abusive. "O new and detestable perversity, to prefer warfare to the clerical office, the forum to the church, human to divine things, earthly to heavenly!" This is what St. Bernard exclaims, on hearing that Stephen Garlande, archdeacon of Paris, had the office of seneschal in the court of Louis the Sixth, king of France. The assumption of arms by the clergy, was always considered irregular and inconsistent. William of Jumièges speaks of a certain Raoul, surnamed the Clerk, on account of his study of letters, and also called "*male-couronne*," because, applying also to chivalrous exercises, he did not well maintain the clerical gravity.§

The Irish synod, in the eighth century, decreed that if any priest should be slain in war or in a popular tumult, no oblations or prayers were to be offered up for him, though his body might be buried.|| Indeed, all the ancient councils were most strict in forbidding the clergy to join in any military expedition, or be accessory to the shedding of either pagan or Christian blood.

Charlemagne, attending to the remonstrances of the Holy See, and to the prayers of the bishops, published this decree: "At the entreaty of the apostolic seat, and with the advice of all our faithful, and especially of the bishops and other priests, we correcting ourselves, and giving an example to our posterity, express our will that no priest shall ever go against the enemy, unless two or three bishops chosen by the others, for the purpose of giving benediction, and of preaching and of reconciling the people, and with them chosen priests, who may receive

\* De reb. gest. Ludov. Pii, tom. II. Rer. Ital. Script.

† Abbonis De Lutecia Parisiorum a Normannis obsessa, Lib. I. 23.

‡ Id.

§ Hist. Lib. VII. c. 10.

|| Lib. XXXIX. cap. 14; apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. IX.

them to the sacrament of penance, and celebrate mass, and take care of the sick, and administer to them the unction of holy oil with divine prayers, and above all provide that no one may depart from the world without viaticum.”\*

The bishop of Beauvais, on being taken prisoner by Richard I., wrote to the pope, imploring him to intercede for his deliverance, with the king of England. The pope's answer was as follows, “Celestin, bishop, servant of the servant of God, to his dear brother, Philip, bishop of Beauvais, benediction ; you inform me that a calamity has befallen you ; I am not astonished at it. You chose to leave the pacific government of the flock for the field of battle, the mitre for the helmet, the pastoral staff for the lance, the chasuble for the cuirass, the ring for the sword ; you have sought—well, and you have found ; you have struck—you are, in your turn, stricken. Nevertheless, I shall write to Richard to ask for your deliverance.” The well-known answer of the king must have been therefore suggested by what had been previously pronounced by the ecclesiastical authority, of which modern historians take care that their readers shall know nothing. It should be observed that in general, under these warlike and political bishops, some of whom were not even priests, the churches were not allowed to suffer, being governed in their absence by coadjutors, who took personal care of the flock ;† and after all, it is curious to observe, that even these abuses worked to the good of the church, as when they gave rise to the foundation of one of her most illustrious orders, for it was the horror which was inspired by Manasses, the proud and impious potentate, who said, “it would be well to be archbishop of Rheims, if it were not necessary to sing mass,” that induced Bruno, in order to avoid the spectacle of his vanity, in company with some other noble clerks, to withdraw from that city, and become the founder of the Carthusian family.‡ Nevertheless, even in Italy, in the tenth century, when evils seemed almost to have attained the climax, sanctity was not confined to the apostolic chair, for there was then several most holy prelates, such as Theodoric and Grimoald, archbishops of Pisa, Adalbert Bergomatensis, a man of great sanctity, wisdom, and courage, who defended his city against the barbarians, and restored it from ruins, Notharius, bishop of Verona, Gebehard, archbishop of Ravenna, Oegidius, bishop of Tusculum, Peter and Gauzlin, bishops of Padua, and many others, who were true examples of the apostolic life in evil days. No doubt some things were formerly tolerated, which would now be deemed insufferable ; but even in those cases we must be slow to judge. “I am not ignorant,” says Thomassinus, “with what horror and grief, pious men, and lovers of ecclesiastical discipline, now regard such customs ; and their grief is to be applauded : but neither should we condemn the number of holy men who practised or tolerated it. One and the same wisdom and charity order us now to rejoice in their abolition, and forbid us to condemn these men. It will be no small fruit if we derive from the whole re-

\* An. 800. Con. Gall. tom. II. 235. cap. Lib. VII. c. 91. 103.

† Anquetil Hist. de Rheims, Lib. I. c. 9. IV. 237.

‡ Guiberti de Novigent. de vita propria, Lib. I. c. 11.



view of these ages that moderation of mind, that amplitude of genius, that equability, which piously and religiously embraces and reveres the ancient discipline of the church, not always similar to itself, but always fashioned by the same wisdom and charity.\*

To examine the sacerdotal character in the remaining members of the clergy, during the ages of faith, will be a task of no difficulty. The testimony of an historian who has studied in the original sources the history of the middle ages, must correspond with that delivered by Montiel, when he says, attesting the results of his own observations, "I have lived with that good, that excellent race of men, the French rectors; I have known them perfectly, both externally and internally, and I believe in my conscience that if it had existed in the time of Noah, the human race would have been saved, had there been necessary for its absolution, not merely ten, but ten thousand just."† "I have known many of the old French clergy," says another distinguished writer, "and it is the remembrance of my life which is the most flattering to myself, and the most agreeable."‡

Addison's idea of the ministers of the Anglican discipline in its classic age, is that of "one of the three great professions greatly overburdened with practitioners, and filled with multitudes of ingenious gentlemen that starve one another;"§ in which judgment he was not singular, for Burton complains, that in consequence of the avarice of the lay patrons, "poor university men like himself, having at last obtained a small benefice, are soon made weary of it, if not of their lives, so that many became malsters, graziers, chapmen, and daily converse with a company of idiots and clowns;"|| a cruel alternative certainly for ingenious men of refined breeding. Of their genius and erudition there have been left indeed abundant monuments; still this testimony of friends and disciples is not such as would be rendered to men who followed the standard proposed to the Catholic clergy in the chapter which the church reads at the vespers of a confessor, "*Beatus vir, qui inventus est sine macula, et qui post aurum non abiit, nec speravit in pecunia et thesauris.*" The church immediately demands, "*Quis est hic, et laudabimus eum? Fecit enim mirabilia in vita sua.*" Yet she knew well that the voice of the people in most towns and villages during the ages of faith, would have answered without hesitation that it was their own pastor who placed his hope not in uncertain riches, but in the prayers of the poor, of whom they might have said, in the words of St. Bernard, "*non evangelizat, ut comedat; sed comedit, un evangelizet.*" Reader, it is guides belonging to the Catholic camp, who, while mortal, began to exhibit the glory of that second stole, and not the ingenious gentlemen described by Addison, that you are about to behold, therefore

—"Down, down; bend low  
Thy knees; behold God's angel; fold thy hands;  
Now shalt thou see true ministers indeed."¶

\* De Vet. et Nova Disciplina, pars III. Lib. I. cap. 45. † Hist. des François tom. III. p. 377.

‡ Rubichon, du Mécanisme de la Société 332. § Spec. 21. || I. 3 ¶ Dante Purg. II.

God was angry with the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and who fed not the flock. "What was weak ye did not strengthen, and what was sick ye did not heal; what was broken ye did not bind up, what was fallen ye did not raise, and what was lost ye did not seek: but with austerity ye did govern them, and with power: and my sheep are dispersed because there was no pastor, and they are made the prey of all the beasts of the field, and they are scattered. My flocks wandered over all mountains, and upon every high hill, and over the whole face of the earth they are dispersed, and there was no one to seek after them."\* That the Catholic clergy realized the description of the good shepherd, as commemorated in the Gospel, is a fact of history borne out by the continued observation of mankind, which the supporters of the modern discipline were constrained repeatedly to admit, as when the Anglican Dean of Winchester, in his sermon before a convocation, in the year 1742, said, "So that if we were to consider them, not with regard to what they believe, but to the diligence with which they look after their flocks, we should think that they were the reformed at present, and that our reformation was still to come." What were the ideas respecting the sacerdotal character which prevailed in the middle ages? St. Ambrose had said, "the duty of a priest is to injure no one, and to wish to render good service to all men;" and St. Bonaventura sums up the function in these words, "It is of the sacerdotal office that all who are deprived of human assistance in this world may be able, by its tuition, to find a remedy." Now that this was a supernatural character, even the philosophy of the Gentiles might lead us to conclude. Socrates assuredly would teach us to regard the Catholic clergy as divine men; for he says, "it does not seem to me to be human to disregard all the affairs of one's self, and to neglect for so many years one's domestic interests, and to be always occupied about the interests of other men, *ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ προσιόντα ὥς περ πατέρα ἢ ἀδελφὸν πρεσβύτερον, πείθοντα ἐπιμελεῖσθαι ἀρετῆς.*† Might not one suppose that he was speaking of the men commemorated by the church, who despised the life of the world, and came to the celestial kingdoms? The fact is, that in a priest of the holy Catholic and Roman church every thing was divine—his commission, his authority, the origin of his ordination, the duties which it imposed, the fidelity with which he fulfilled them; with him was associated no idea of a beginning from below, of a political origin, which rendered it advisable to invoke Angerona, the goddess of silence, as in the old days of Rome, when the true name of that city was never disclosed to the people: there was no break and interruption in the titles of his authority, in consequence of the adoption at one period of a rite, which being opposed to the institution of Christ, and the apostolic traditions, and besides embracing manifest heresies, was necessarily invalid.‡ St. Ambrose says, that "Pythagoras in forbidding his disciples to live in a popular manner, had derived the idea from

\* Ezek. xxxiv.

† Plato Apolog. 31.

‡ Joan. Devoti Inst. Can. Lib. II. tit. 2.

the Holy Scriptures, which speak of taking off the shoes, of shaking off the dust of a common way, of leaving the people and ascending the mountains. You see then," he adds, "the separation—nothing plebeian should be found in priests, nothing vulgar, nothing common with the study, custom, and manner of the undisciplined multitude. The sacerdotal dignity requires for itself sober gravity, serious life, and singular weight, separate from the crowd."\* Hugo of St. Victor shows that this is symbolically implied in the ecclesiastical ritual; "For," saith he, "bishops are consecrated on Sundays, because it was on the Sunday that the apostles received the Holy Ghost, and also as being the day of our Lord's resurrection, that they may be admonished to walk in newness of life; but priests and other ministers of the church are ordained on Saturdays, the sabbath day, that they may learn to rest for ever from all servile work, and to devote themselves to the service of God."† By the council of Narbonne, in 589, clerks were forbidden to loiter on the public places, or to take part in the conversations held there. "The life of a priest," says cardinal Bona, "who would worthily say mass, is divine and superhuman, and opposite to the mundane, carnal life. He who lives thus, withdraws from creatures, and adheres to God alone. God alone is in his intelligence, alone in his will, alone in his conversation, alone in his works."‡

The sacerdotal character was historical as well as holy, and in both respects, no doubt, much of its excellence was owing to the ecclesiastical obligation imposed upon priests to recite the canonical office. It was to be wished, indeed, as Mabillon said, "that the will of the ministers of Christ might spontaneously be directed to fulfil the offices of piety without requiring the stimulus of law; but such is the depravation of customs, and such the vanity of opinions, that the intervention of laws is necessary to recall good manners, lest they should ever perish, and to retain piety, lest the forgetfulness of God should at length possess all minds oppressed with the multitude of secular cares."§ That the lessons of the second nocturns of the Roman breviary might be subjected to criticism was a fact well known. Pope Benedict XIV. says, that although the historic facts as there related are of great authority, yet difficulties raised from them with modesty, and on solid foundations, may always be submitted to the judgment of the apostolic see, for all things inserted in the martyrology are not of unquestionable truth, as is clear from repeated corrections.||

Granting even that some of the circumstances related in these fragments might be rather mythical than historical, still they showed what was the ancient opinions of the fact, and the moral lesson which they inculcated was salutary, often sublime, and if reason alone here is to be heard, surely the opinions of the minute philosophers of our day, who carp at such passages can hardly be preferred to the judgment of the ancient Pythagoreans, who used to assent to all relations respecting God, and

\* Epist. Lib. I. 6.

† Hugo St. Victor De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Lib. I. cap. 44.

‡ De Missa Tractat. Ascet. cap. II. 2.

§ Mabillonii Disquisit. de cursu Gallicano, 6.

|| De canonizat. sanctorum. Lib. IV. cap. 17.



to make mention of such as seemed fabulous ; to use the words of their historians, *ὡς οὐδὲν ἀπιστοῦντες ὅ τι ἂν εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἀνάγῃται*.\* The breviary, in a philosophic and even literary point of view, perhaps the hardest of all books, was not merely the manual of saints, the very soul and essence of the Holy Scriptures ; it contained all inestimable treasures for the historian, for the poet, for the philosopher ; it was the history of men, and the history of Providence, bringing down to each successive age the wondrous theme of eternity begun for us in Genesis. What consolation besides must innumerable priests, at various times have derived, like Cardinal Pacca, when carried away captive from Rome, by marking the passages applicable to their personal condition, which occurred in the office of each day.† If men can be known by knowing the books they read, the clergy ought to have been venerable in the eyes of the just, solely on the ground of their daily recitation of the breviary. The admirable excellence of this discipline has often appeared to me in a striking manner, while travelling through France, when before arriving at some village church or lonely chapel, one sees a priest in the distance, walking solitary in the fields at even-tide, in the midst of an impious and deluded generation, meditating in his breviary the law of God, which converteth the heart ; chanting to himself the songs of mercy and judgment, which recount the mysteries of the everlasting Gospel !

Let us now proceed to inquire what fruits of justice were associated in the ages of faith with the distribution and employment of the ecclesiastical revenues. In what light plurality of benefices was regarded by the clergy of the thirteenth century may be learned from the solemn disputation which took place before William of Paris, in the year 1238. Guiard, Bishop of Cambrai, declared, that for all the gold of Arabia, he would not retain two benefices a single night. William of Paris had admonished Philip, chancellor of the university, on his death-bed ; but he could not prevail on him to retract his opinion. Albert the Great records, that shortly after his death, as William was going to matins, a dark object interposed between him and the light, announced to the affrighted bishop the doom of the impenitent pluralist, who, though once wise and learned, confesses that he knows now nothing, being involved in the profound ignorance that reigns among the damned. The council of Agatha decreed, that to a priest who neglected to frequent his church, nothing should be given, excepting what was termed the stranger's allowance ; which was the sum that used to be paid to strange clerks, being less than what was due to those who served a church.‡ Unless for some just cause, canons could not be absent for more than three months, and during that time they did not receive the daily distributions, which were only given to those who were present in choir.§ Sanson, Archbishop of

\* Jamblich de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 28.

† Pacca Memorie Storiche. II. cap. 1.

‡ Thomassinus de Vet. et nova. Eccles. Discip. III. Lib. II. c. 15.

§ Joan. Devoti Insti. can. Lib. I. tit. 3.

Rheims, deprived the non-resident canons of the revenue of their prebends.\* In the eighth century, the Irish Synod decreed that a priest should not be absent more than one day from the church; if he staid away two days he was to fast for seven on bread and water; if absent on a Sunday, he was to fast for twenty days on bread and water.† Nevertheless the intellectual interests of the individual were not sacrificed. In the year 1406, Thomas Crawlegh, prebendary of Lusk, had licence to absent himself from Ireland for two years, for the purpose of studying at Oxford, with liberty to receive the fruits and profits of his benefice; and in the library of the chapter of Evreux might be read the brief of Pope Nicholas V., granting permission to Robert de Cibole, a man of great learning, dean of that cathedral, to reside in whatever place would be most favorable to the prosecution of his studies.‡ The clergy, in general, were allowed by the bishop, in proportion to their labors and circumstances. If the cathedral were rich, it sent funds to repair indigent parish churches; if poor, and some parish churches rich, they were to contribute to its support.§ Possidius says, that St. Augustin made no will, as being himself one of the poor of Christ, who had not wherewithal to make one; for whatever he possessed was common to his clergy.|| The house of the priest was the house of the bishop, and the house of God. St. Augustin desired that it might not be called the priest's house, "Nemo amplius dicat, in domum presbyteri. Ecce ubi est domus presbyteri; ubi est domus mea, ibi est domus presbyteri; alibi non habet domum nisi ubicumque habet Deum." "I make you my heir," says Salyrus on his death-bed to his brother, St. Ambrose, "for you had before constituted me yours, but I am to depart before you." He left no written testament, but he asked St. Ambrose to give what should seem just to the poor. St. Ambrose accordingly gave the whole: "for this," said he, "is the highest justice." Paulinus mentions that St. Ambrose left no will, having already disposed of every thing to the Church, and to the poor.¶ Constantius the priest gives a similar reason to account for the blessed bishop Germain having left no will. Neither did Paulinus nor St. Hilary, bishop of Arles, leave any will, for they had reserved nothing to themselves. The third council of Carthage, and the council of Antioch made decrees against bishops who should accumulate wealth from the church, so as to leave heirs, though they might dispose of what had come to them from other sources. It was the custom of the eastern bishops to renounce all property on their consecration, and priests on their ordination were enjoined to do the same by the third council of Carthage. By the laws of Justinian bishops were not allowed to leave by testament any wealth which had been derived from the church.

St. John, the almoner patriarch of Alexandria, had found an incredible sum of gold money in the church treasury, yet when he came to die, he could say, "I

\* Hist. de Rheims, II.

† Capit. Canonum Hiber. XXV. apud Dacher. Spicileg. IX.

‡ Hist. d'Evreux.

§ Thomassinus III. 11. 15.

|| In Vita, cap. 31.

¶ Paulinus Jus. Vita. c. 19.

thank thee, O God, for having heard my misery, when I besought thy goodness that nothing might be found in my possession when I came to die, unless one penny." St. Remi left the greatest part of what he possessed to the church, but named his two nephews as his heirs; he did not even forget twelve poor people who used to beg before the church doors, and forty widows. Sonnatius, archbishop of Rheims, followed these primitive examples, as did also Hadoinus, bishop in the year 642, and Didierius in 648. The blessed Perpetuus, archbishop of Tours, left a will which began thus: "I Perpetuus, a sinner, priest of the church of Tours, am unwilling to depart without a testament, lest the poor should be defrauded of those things which the supernal grace had liberally and lovingly conferred upon me unworthy, and lest the goods of the priest should pass elsewhere besides to the church." When the bishop of Tarragonna died intestate, the priests and deacons met, and made an inventory of every thing, even to the least article of furniture, when the whole were disposed of as he would have wished it, according to the canons.

So little avaricious was Charlemagne, that he made a decree, that if any bishop or priest died intestate, his goods were all to go to the Church which he served. King John of England, on the contrary, claimed for himself, on these occasions. Herardus, archbishop of Tours, made a rule in his synodical constitutions, "that whatever was acquired in sacred orders, should be left to the respective churches. Aldricus, a bishop in the reign of Louis le Debonnaire, left a will bequeathing all his goods to the churches, monasteries, clerks, to the poor, and to his servants.\* This was always the motive assigned by bishops, for making a will, lest the Church and the poor should be defrauded. The blessed Udalricus, before his death, gave even the furniture of his episcopal palace to the poor: and the blessed Gebbard, bishop of Constance, being of a noble and rich family, prevailed upon his brethren to give him a portion, that he might apply to the use of the poor, what would be otherwise spent in the luxury and pomps of the world. The blessed Burchard, bishop of Worms, left in his house, on his death, the sacred vessels of the Church, and three denarii; for every thing had been given to the poor.†

When the blessed Hugo, bishop of Lincoln, was near death, he was admonished to make a will, according to custom; he replied, "I am weary of this custom, every where introduced into the Church; I neither had nor have any thing which is not of the Church, which I was commissioned to govern. Nevertheless, lest the fisc should carry it off, let all that I seem to possess, be given to the poor."‡ St. Bernard relates that Atto, bishop of Troyes, in his sickness, gave all that he had to the poor, and confirmed it when he was not in danger of death. John of Salisbury gives the Testament of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, and his letter to the king, in which last he says, that the furniture which he retains till his

\* Baluz. Misc. Tom. III. p. 38.

† Baron. an. 1026.

‡ Surius Novem. 17. cap. 28.



death, will be of no use to any one but to the poor, as he has pronounced the most dire curse on all who would deprive them of inheriting it. He left all to the poor; and when the blessed Stephen, bishop of Dieu, in 1213, was pressed to make a will, he replied, "It is needless, since every thing belongs to my spouse, which I undertook to govern."\* It was not till the sixteenth century, that the new custom prevailed of relations becoming the heirs of those who held ecclesiastical benefices. The blessed Anno, archbishop of Cologne, had reserved nothing for himself, but his ring and his sacred furniture. His words were these: "Why doth the estimation of men celebrate me, as one of the great and rich? Lo, besides the utensils of my chapel, my pontificals, and this ring, I know not whether I possess even one denarium. For neither do I collect the treasures of insatiable avarice in my cloisters, which could attract the greedy, having carefully provided that I should not leave so much as one farthing on my death for their talons."†

Of the liberality and goodness with which the episcopal domains were governed, a remarkable evidence incidentally occurs in the canons of the council of Orleans, held in the year 511, which decrees, "that if through humanity, a bishop should lend Church lands to be cultivated, no length of time should give rise to any prescription."

In the synodical constitutions of Stephen, bishop of Paris, in 1503, the clergy were forbidden to leave the goods of the Church by will to other persons, or places, than to their churches. He could not declare their wills invalid, but he reminded them of their canonical duty. William Avernis, bishop of Paris, hearing that on the death of an intestate canon, 3000 marks of silver devolved to him, shuddered at this treasure of the mammon of iniquity, and ordered it all to be expended on the poor. Striking his hands together, he replied, "Far be it from me, but, alas! the wretched man! let his money perish with him." St. Charles Borromeo left all that he possessed to the hospital, to the clergy, and to the poor of Milan.‡

William of Malmesbury says, that Rudulph, archbishop of Canterbury, and successor to St. Anselm, acquired nothing by the amplitude of his fortunes, but the power of conferring more benefits upon whom he would.§ St. Augustin would not ordain any man who did not relinquish all his private possessions, and resolve to live from thenceforth upon what the Church would allow him, in common with the rest of her clergy. This did Paulinus, this did St. Cyprian, who abandoned great wealth, though nevertheless he had a country house at the time of his martyrdom; this did St. Ambrose, this did Felix, this did Nepotianus, as testified by St. Jerome; this did St. Martin, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, Theodoret, Epiphanius, Porphyrius of Gaza, and innumerable others. The alms of the laity, enriched the Church,|| but the clergy knew at the same time that the

\* Rainald. an. 1213.

† Surius die 4 Decemb. cap. 31.

‡ Thomassinus de vet. et nova Discip. III Lib. II. cap. 38—cap. 50.

§ De Gestis Pontiff. Anglorum, Lib. I.

|| Id. III. Lib. III. cap. 3

property of the Church was nothing else but the vows of the faithful, the price of sins, and the patrimony of the poor.

Julianus Pomerius observes, that this discipline is not hard when every one adopts it; that what seems difficult to those who do not practise it, becomes easy to those who observe it; as soon as it becomes a custom, it disturbs no one.\* This discipline was generally observed through the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries; though the obligation does not seem to have continued, since clerks might retain their patrimony, while it was expected that they would reserve for themselves only what was necessary to support them in common with others. Until the tenth century, the life of the clergy in community, continued to be a great obstacle to corruption and avarice. The Roman council in 1059, under Pope Nicholas II. invited all the clergy to this society of common or apostolic life.† At this a hundred and thirteen bishops assisted; the decrees were sent into France, and during the succeeding ages, till the sixteenth century, numerous communities of clergy were formed with this object. Cardinal Bellarmine shows that all theologians taught that clerks might only reserve for themselves what was necessary for a decent subsistence; and that what was superfluity was to be given to the poor.‡ Hence, say the ancient writers, we should not wonder, or be offended at the riches of the Church. A priest, to whom the care of dispensation is committed, not only without cupidity, but also with the praise of piety, receives from the people things to be distributed, and faithfully dispenses what he receives; he leaves all his own either to his relations, or to the poor, or to the Church, and through the love of poverty, makes himself of the number of the poor, so that from the funds which he ministers to the poor, he also himself as voluntarily poor, may live.§

Manual labor was prescribed not alone by many of the religious orders, of which St. Augustin saw whole congregations of men and women at Rome, and Milan, thus employed. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, cultivated a garden; Felix, priest and martyr, was a tiller of the ground. St. Hilary, archbishop of Arles, with his clerks, worked with their hands. The clergy were exhorted to labor in the apostolic constitutions. The blessed Spiridion, bishop of Cyprus, tended a flock of sheep. Sozomen says, that the holy bishop Zeno, when past his one hundredth year, never ceased laboring with his hands, though he held the keys of the richest church. Fulgentius advised all his clergy to have a garden, that they might cultivate it with their own hand; and Gregory of Tours says, that Nicetius, bishop of Lyons, continued to work in his father's house, that he might experience bodily labor. Under Charlemagne and the successors of his race, the clergy were exhorted to labor by the councils; and the rules of Chrodegangus prescribed occasionally, even the most servile offices to the clergy.|| Manual la-

\* De Vita. contemp. Lib. II. c. 10.

† Can. 4.

‡ De clericis, Lib. I c. 27.

§ Julianus Pomerius de Vita contemp. Lib. II. cap. II vide etiam Thomass. III. Lib. III. cap. 1.—cap. 8.

|| Can. 13, 14.

bor was prescribed and practised by Bishop Theodulph, by Hinemar, by Actardus, bishop of Nantes, by Adalbert, bishop of Prague, by St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, by Bernard, bishop of Hildesheim. Similarly after the tenth century, Petrus of Damian, archbishop of Mainz, being cast into prison by his relation, the emperor Otho, passed his time in writing out the Psalter in letters of gold, and took such pleasure in that work, that when he obtained liberty to go out, he refused to leave the prison till he had finished it. In the year 1207, Julianus, a holy bishop, having given every thing to the poor, supported himself and a companion, by making baskets of rushes. Innumerable priests in the thirteenth century, worked with their hands voluntarily. The blessed Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, had often been employed in the fields, in rustic labor, with his brethren of the Cistercian order.\*

Sophronius relates, that a certain bishop abandoned his see, and went in disguise to Jerusalem, where he offered himself to serve the builders. At this time, Ephremius, a pious and charitable man, was count of the east; and under him men were repairing the public edifices after an earthquake. His attention was so much excited by the assiduity and good conduct of this strange laborer, that at length he began to question him respecting his origin. It was not till after much importunity, and upon condition of observing inviolable secrecy, that he extorted the secret from the humble workman, who confessed that he was a bishop, who for God had come to an unknown place to support himself with the labor of his hands. Ephremius gave glory to God, and exclaimed how many hidden servants hath God, known only to himself.†

Commerce and trade were strictly forbidden to the clergy in the first five centuries. The councils of Carthage were express. St. Ambrose showed the necessity of this law, to preserve that tranquillity of mind which is essential to the sacerdotal character. For that is tranquillity of mind and temperance, which is neither affected by the study of gain, nor harassed by the fear of indigence. The same lesson was inculcated by St. Augustin,‡ St. Jerome,§ and by Epiphanius, in his exposition of the Catholic faith. Pope Leo enforced it with powerful reasons;|| and the council of Chalcedon prohibited the clergy from involving themselves in any manner in secular affairs. The councils of France during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, enforced the same discipline, as did also those of Spain. The ships of churches did not excite even a suspicion of trade. In the council of Mayence, under Charlemagne, the prohibition is repeated; so also in that of London in 1175, under pain of anathema.¶ To the same effect was the sentence of the council of Avignon in 1279, that of Cologne in 1536, and that of Milan, under St. Charles.\*\*

\* Thomass. III. Lib. cap. 9—cap. 16.

† Pratum Spirituale. cap. 39.

‡ De opere Monac. c. 15. de verbis dom. in Mart. Ser. XIX.

§ Epist. ad Nepotian.

|| Im Decret. cap. 23. Epist. 92. ¶ Can. 10. \*\* Thomassin. III. Lib. III. cap. 17—cap. 21.



The clergy were prohibited from conducting the affairs of lay nobles, by a council under Urban II. in 1089, and by that of London in 1102.

St. Cyprian would not permit mass to be said for Victor after his death, because, contrary to the canons, he had nominated as guardian Faustinus, who was a priest ; and he adds this reason to the authority of his predecessors, "that he did not deserve to be named at the altar of God in the prayers of the priests who had wished to withdraw priests from the altar ;" priests were not permitted to exercise the office of judge, or of any member of the secular courts, by the same council of London, and by that of Rheims in 1131, which extended the prohibition to the practice of medicine. These prohibitions as to law and medicine, were enforced by the second and fourth councils of Lateran, and of Tours, in 1163.

However, it is clear, that the clergy were often called to conduct the councils of kings and princes. William of Malmesbury says, "that under Ethelwulph, king of England, the greatest destruction would have fallen upon the kingdom and the Church, had not Swithin and Alstan, bishops of Worcester and Sherburn, come to the aid of the state, in the management of the finances, and of the war. Edmund, king of England, called St. Dunstan to his councils, and the blessed Herebert, archbishop of Cologne, accompanied Otho III. into Italy, to conduct the affairs of his kingdom. It is remarkable to read the reasons assigned by Pope Gregory IX. for prohibiting clerks from accepting civil offices ; "Because it is the sacerdotal office to hurt no one, but to wish to do good to all."

Many holy men refused ecclesiastical dignities, from an unwillingness to be entangled in temporal affairs. St. Domnole, beloved of Clotaire, was to be raised to the see of Avignon, but he refused, beseeching the king that he would not permit his simplicity to be fatigued amidst sophistical senators, and philosophic judges.\*

It is certain, however, that bishops and abbots sat in all the ancient parliaments. History records with honor, the names of several who presided over the councils of kings, such as the abbot Suger, whom St. Bernard would never have praised, if his conduct had been contrary to holy discipline ; and yet he says of him, in a letter to Pope Eugene III. "I have known the man, and seen him faithful and prudent in temporals, fervent and humble in spirituals, and what is most difficult, conducting himself in both without reproach. With Cæsar, he is as one of the Roman court ; with God, as if one of the court of heaven."

Tilpin, archbishop of Rheims, deserved by his great ability, the confidence reposed in him by Charlemagne, who always kept him at his side, that he might consult him on every occasion. He made him follow his expedition into Spain. This was he that was so famous in old romance, under the name of Turpin. The real prelate had all the qualities of a great bishop ; zeal, learning, prudence, lofty views, and the love of justice. It was Tilpin who placed monks in the cathe-

\* Greg. Turon. I. VI. c. 9.

dral, and who began the construction of the church, and library, which were finished by Hincmar.\*

The name of Peter Abeillard, abbot of St. Gildas, is at the bottom of the most important charters of the Dukes of Brittany, which shows that his merit and abilities gave him an eminent post in the state.†

In the year 1190, Philip Augustus, making an expedition beyond sea, left the regency of the kingdom in the hands of the queen, and of William, archbishop of Rheims. At the court of St. Louis, and of Philip III. his son, no one was so distinguished in the administration, as Matthew, abbot of St. Denis; and Charles VII. in 1458, called to his council the bishop of Paris. Lanefranc, archbishop of Canterbury, was made regent of England, in 1099:‡ and William Rufus committed the administration of his kingdom to William, bishop of Durham.§ Alexander III. sent very angry letters to Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, because the bishops of Winchester, Ely, and Norwich, were suffered to remain so long at court, to the neglect of their churches; and the archbishop returned answer, by the pen of Peter of Blois, that these were good men; that it was not a novelty for bishops to assist at the councils of kings; for as they surpass others in virtue and wisdom, so are they considered more expeditious and efficient in the administration of the republic.|| When Richard I. assumed the reins of government, he committed the administration of the whole kingdom to William, bishop of Ely; and on his return from Palestine, he gave the same authority to Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury; and in the reign of Henry II. the bishops of Winchester, Ely, and Norwich, had been chief justices over all other judges, and had distinguished themselves by their wisdom and moderation; for though they acted against the canons in accepting office, the king's command, and perhaps the necessity of the times, obliged them to do it. Roger, bishop of Salisbury, would not accept of this office, till he yielded through holy obedience to St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury. Under Edward III. almost all the great officers of the palace and kingdom were clerks, the chancellor, the treasurer, the keeper of the little seal, ten masters of chancery, and innumerable others; but through the remonstrance of pope Urban V., the laity began to be more employed in the government. Gregory IX. consented that Henry III. might retain bishops in his councils. "You assert that through the pious devotion of your ancestors, the custom was introduced, that the kings of England should always have some bishops counsellors of their kingdom. We, therefore, believing in your pious intention, and hoping to provide for the utility both of your kingdom, and of the church, grant faculties to the bishops whom you have summoned for this purpose, that they may assist you in council as utility and virtue may require."¶ The king gave the office of justice to abbots, which went beyond the pope's intention, so that the bishop of Lin-

\* Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, Liv 1. 87.

‡ Matt. Paris, cap. XV.

§ Baron. an. 1176.

† Lobineau Hist. de Bret. tom. II. 252.

§ Williel. Malmesbur. Lib. IV. p. 120.

¶ Rainald. Ann. 1231. n. 51.

coln wrote to the archbishop of Canterbury, exciting him to prevent such impiety ; but the king kept to his point, and the archbishop replied that there was no hope of redress till the next council, though the bishop of Lincoln continued to produce canons and testimonies of every kind against the practice.

If we pass alone into Germany, we shall find the instances still more numerous. Gebehard, bishop of Eichstad, was chief minister to Henry II., and the blessed Anno, archbishop of Cologne, had governed during his minority ; and it was not till after his departure that Henry gave way to all the intemperance of youth. Anno, on accepting the office, had procured a decree that always it should be the bishop in whose diocese the king might be remaining, who was to take care that the republic came to no injury, and who was to answer and decide the causes brought to the king. This was in 1062. The education of the king, and the ordination of all public affairs, were in the hands of the archbishop of Mainz and Cologne, occasionally joined with the archbishop of Bremen. Richard I. ascribes the success of his proceedings in Germany to Adalbert, archbishop of Salzburg. " We return multiplied thanks to your paternity," he says in a letter to him, " for having studied so efficaciously to further the deliverance of our pledges, whom the Duke of Austria held ; for whatever was done to our advantage in that article we know was done by your diligence, but what you did over and above shall be extolled for ever, and the fame of your goodness shall never perish ; for you did what you ought to do, since second after the lord pope you hold the place of blessed Peter."\* John of Salisbury says, that in his time the king of Denmark, dismissing the archbishop, resolved to govern by himself ; but that he soon called him back again, and honored him as a father.† John Magnus records in his history of the Goths, that king Eric called to his councils Henry, archbishop of Upsal, by whose advice and pious exhortations the devout king ordered the course of his life. Throughout the whole of the north of Germany, the ministers of the altar were made ministers of the royal court, as pope Paschal II. said.‡ Yet secular dignities did not involve them in secular vices. The emperor Otho I., being called away to the eastern parts of the empire, committed the west to the government of the archbishop of Cologne. In Spain the result is found similar. Memorable is the example related by Roderic, archbishop of Toledo, speaking of king Veremundus. He was of a noble and truly royal mind, and adorned with all kingly virtues, yet he abdicated the crown in the midst of his glory ; for he recollected, and repeatedly considered, that he had been formerly initiated in the office of deacon, and he saw that the duties of that sacred dignity could hardly be united with a crown. He gave up his kingdom to Alfonso, his relation, in whose palace he lived many years, observing the law of celibacy. This was before the year 800. Casimir being a deacon, and a monk of Cluny, when restored to the crown of Poland, might have had a dispensation

\* *Germania Sacra*, tom. II. 956.

† *Baron. an.* 1167.

‡ *Epist.* 22.



from the pope ; but the urgent distresses of his unhappy country prescribed a different conduct from that of Veremundus. Cardinal Ximenes, of the Franciscan order, and archbishop of Toledo, was for a long time ruler of the kingdom ; and it appears that formerly the archbishops of Toledo, by their office, were always the chief ministers of the king.

As Thomassinus says, "it was not ambition, but the religion of kings, the piety and faith of prelates, and the ardor and contention of both to defend and restore the dignity of the Church and kingdom, which laid the foundation of the wondrous authority of this see." The office of prebendary or chancellor, was almost exclusively reserved for bishops and abbots, in France, England, Spain, Portugal, and Germany during all these ages. Yet when St. Thomas of Canterbury was elected, he sent back the great seals to the king, renouncing the office of chancellor, lest he should be straitened by bonds of the court ; at which the king was angry in heart, for in fact, while chancellor, he had repressed the audacity of the king's flatterers, who like hawks conspired to prey upon the goods of the Church, as Matthew of Paris says.\* The fact of this influence of the clergy in the councils of kings, instead of sanctioning the imputations of the modern sophists, is, on the contrary, only a fresh evidence of the extraordinary thirst and fulfilment of justice, which characterized the middle ages. Surely it was well for a people when a counsellor stood near the throne, to whom a just monarch could say,

—"Speak, my lord,  
And we will hear, note, and believe in heart  
That what you speak is in your conscience washed  
As pure as sin in baptism."

Well was it for a people when a holy churchman could furnish proof of the charm of justice, and the empire which it exercises over men ; so that of him history could record, as it testified of Suger, that the king respected him as if he had been his father, and feared him as if he had been his master.

The old books of the Anglo Saxons are full of letters from kings addressed to holy men, written in the style of filial respect, and great humility. Thus Ælfbwald, king of the East Saxons, says, in his letter to St. Boniface, "We wish you to know with what gratitude we heard that our littleness was commended to your holy prayers, and that your benignity had offered the solemn masses and prayers to God in our behalf. We shall endeavor to fulfil with a devout mind what you desire respecting the monasteries of our kingdom. That as the predestination of God hath placed you a pastor over the people, so we wish that you should feel our protection as your patron."† Hear what say the laws of the Visigoths, "The priests of God, to whom for remedy of the oppressed and the poor, the care is divinely committed, are, with paternal solicitude, to admonish the judges who should op-

\* Thomassinus, Pars III. Lib. III. cap. 22, 25.

† S. Bonif. Epist. LXVII.

press the people, that they may amend and reverse the things wrongfully judged; and if such judges should bear false sentence, then the bishop in whose territory it occurs having convened the judges, shall, in council with priests, or other fit men, terminate the affair according to justice: but if the judge should continue obstinate, then it will be lawful for the bishop to interpose in behalf of the oppressed, till the case is submitted to our serenity.”\* In like manner the council of Arles, in the year 813, reminded the bishops that they were to protect the poor from all oppression, and that they must address themselves to the king to make it cease. In latter times, I grant it would seem as if places of high official power were naturally and properly reserved for unprincipled libertines; but when rulers were willing to be guided by holy men of learning and wisdom, why should philosophers have refused to come to their assistance? Many of the Pythagoreans were great politicians, who ruled Italic cities, and founded free states.† Many Christian pontiffs were the same; no doubt the clergy were masters, because virtue must always be supreme. “Under every law,” as Pindar, who was himself a Pythagorean, says, “a man of upright tongue, εὐθύγλωσσος ἀνὴρ; must excel.”‡ Diogenes being about to be sold by some robbers who had taken him prisoner, put himself up to sale, crying out, “Who wants to buy a master?” At least if the clergy did receive a government which was thrust upon them, surely, as the Athenians once said of themselves, “they did nothing wonderful οὐδ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρωπείου τρόπου; and therefore men of natural views have no right to condemn them.”§ And besides, now that we have seen what was the ideal of all power and authority in the ages of faith, why might not a holy priest reply, in the words of Telemachus, to those who would tax him with ambitious thoughts, “I should have no objection to possess from God what you ridicule.”

ἢ φῆς τοῦτο κακίστου ἐν ἀνθρώποισι τεύχθαι;  
οὐ μὲν γάρ τι κακὸν βασιλευμένον. ||

What men would a lover of justice wish to see enthroned upon the vatican in preference to a Leo or a Gregory? Here the speculation has been verified by the fact; for at Rome, where the desire of Plato has been more than realized, the clergy in possession of that power are distinguished by the utmost modesty, the utmost grace, the greatest tenderness for the poor, the greatest gentleness and condescension for all men; and if it were not that mercy and charity seem to be carried some times almost to excess by the utmost justice. Now, as Glaucus says of Socrates, when the latter had delivered his famous sentence, that philosophy should be united with political power, and should govern, “I am aware that I have uttered a word which will cause a multitude of men, and such as are not altogether to be despised, to rush upon me, casting off their cloaks, and stripping their arms, and each taking

\* Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. II. 30.

† Jamblich. Pythagoric. Vit. cap. 27.

‡ Pyth. Od. II.

§ Thucyd. Lib. I. c. 76.

|| Od. I. 390.

up whatever instrument is near, in order to attack me in a body, as if to perform instantly some famous exploit.”\* Nevertheless I can find nothing in history or in philosophy, to awaken a suspicion that the word is an error. One has accused the obstinacy of the two parties of Henry IV. and Gregory VII., “without remarking,” says Michelet, “that it was not a struggle of men. The men tried to approach each other, and never could. Reconciliation was impossible; nothing can reconcile spirit and matter, flesh and spirit.”† The pontiff was for eternal justice, and the law of God. We need not ask for what cause the other contended.

Churchmen did not seek office or cling to it from ambition. In 1149, the abbot Suger, while regent of France, wrote as follows to the king, pressing his return: “The disturbers of the public repose are again active, while you, who are bound to defend your subjects, remain like a captive in a foreign land. Seigneur, what can occupy your thoughts, to leave thus at the mercy of wolves the sheep confided to you? No, you are not permitted to remain absent any longer. We implore, therefore, your highness, we exhort your piety, we demand of the goodness of your heart, we conjure you by the faith which reciprocally binds the prince and the subjects, to protract your stay in Syria no longer than the festival of Easter, lest a longer delay should render you guilty in the eyes of the Lord, of breaking the oath which you took on receiving the crown. You have reason, I think, to be satisfied with our conduct. We have placed in the hands of the knight templars the money which you had resolved to send us. Besides this, we have repaid the Count de Vermandois the sum which he had lent us for your service. Your lands and your men enjoy at present a happy peace. You will find your houses and your palace in good condition, by means of the repairs which we have conducted. But you see me now in the decline of life, and I dare say that the occupations in which I engaged for the love of God, and through attachment to your person, have greatly accelerated my old age.” Lewis did, accordingly, return, and resume the reins of government, though his absence was more beneficial under Suger, than his presence without him. From that time Suger retired almost completely within the walls of his abbey of Saint Denis.

The correspondence of Alcuin with Charlemagne presents a similar example. In one letter, he restrains the zeal of the emperor respecting the payment of tithes.‡ In another, he recommends him to treat the Huns, who are his prisoners, with indulgence, and to show clemency to his enemies.§ In another, he entreats him to beware of the dangers of the expedition of Beneventum. “Perhaps,” he observes, “some one will say, Why does he meddle with what is foreign to him? Let such a person know that nothing which concerns your prosperity is foreign to me; for I declare it is dearer to me than the health of my body, or the duration of my life. You are the happiness of the kingdom, the safety of the people, the honor of the churches, the protector of all the faithful of Christ: it is under the

\* De Repub. Lib. V.

† Hist. de France, II. 177.

‡ Epist. 28.

§ Epist. 32.



shadow of your power, and under the shelter of your piety, that the divine grace has granted to us the practice of a religious life, and to serve Jesus Christ in peace and quietness : it is, then, just and necessary, that with an attentive mind and a devoted heart, we should be occupied with your fortune and with your health ; and that we should invoke God for this end, thou excellent king and worthy of all honor.”\*

In another letter to an archbishop, in the year 796, we find him retired from court and living in his monastery of Tours. “Let your fraternity know that I your son desire ardently to lay down the burden of the affairs of the world, that I may serve God alone. Every man has need to prepare himself with vigilance, in order to meet God ; much more an old man, worn down with years and infirmities.”† Charlemagne desired to retain him at court, and to take him with him to Rome. “It is a shame,” he writes to him, “to prefer the smoky roofs of the people of Tours to the golden palaces of the Romans ;” but Alcuin was firm. “I could not endure the fatigues of the journey. I implore you to let me finish my career near St. Martin : all the energy, all the dignity of my body is vanished, and vanishes day by day. I shall never recover it in this world. I had hoped in these last days to see once more the face of your beatitude, but the progress of my infirmities obliges me to renounce that hope. I conjure, therefore, your goodness, let not that mind so holy, that will so beneficent, which are in you, be irritated at my weakness : permit, with pious compassion, that a fatigued man take repose, that he pray for you, and that he prepare himself in confession and tears to appear before the Eternal Judge.”‡

Pascasius Radbert describes Wala, the abbot of Corby, as a consummate statesman. “In the senate his genius excelled that of all others, so that if he were asked concerning any of the affairs in hand, immediately without delay, as if from a fountain, flowed the wisest counsel that could be found or given.”§ Nevertheless, he had to defend him from the charge of those who said that he occupied himself too much with affairs of state. “It is the duty,” he observes, “of a good man, of one like Wala, from his birth and connections, endowed with great authority in the state, to consult for the welfare of his country and of his fellow citizens. But why, you ask, did the holy and mortified Wala return to take part in the honors of worldly society, when the empire was falling to pieces ? Because he saw the evils, and wished to obviate them, to resist for the faith of the kingdom and of the king, for the love of his country and of his people, for the religion of the churches, and the salvation of his fellow citizens, which were all dearer to him than his own life.”||

If from the object we pass to investigate the effects of this influence, the assertions of the sophists of the last century will all be found totally erroneous. There

\* Epist. 105.

† Id. 168.

‡ CVI. Epist.

§ Vita ejus apud Mabill. Acta. S. Ordinis Benedict. Sæcul. IV. pars I.

|| Id. Lib. II.

are not wanting writers of research at present, who do not need to be told this. Witness what is said by a modern historian of France, speaking of the legislative assembly in Gaul, in the year 614. "Many articles of a remarkable liberality," says Michelet, "indicate the ecclesiastical hand."\* Who were the men that used to interpose between rulers and their subjects, to save the innocent from oppression, and to stem the violence of arbitrary power? Were not they members of the clergy of whom the church sings, "*Isti sunt triumphatores et amici Dei qui, contemnentes jussa principum, meruerunt præmia æterna*?"

The splendor attached to the episcopal dignity in the middle ages, has given offence to some writers; but Petrus Alliaceus argued wisely, while reproving certain monks who condemned the grandeur which holy bishops had often observed. "These magnificent provisions, whether in houses or vestments, or other exterior ornaments, which they style pomps, were introduced from the time of blessed Pope Sylvester, both for sovereign pontiffs, and for other bishops, and they were solely designed for extolling the glory of Christ and of his Church; to observe which exteriorly with the moderation of temperance, and interiorly without losing humility, is not vanity or vice, but virtue and merit. So that those are vehemently to be censured who, under pretence of humility, proudly inveigh against this custom, and blame on account of its observance the episcopal state."†

Willegisus, archbishop of Mayence, in the tenth century, the friend of kings and princes, was indeed a man of almost royal magnificence, but what prelate ever evinced a more apostolic spirit, or was more profound in the science of the Scriptures? This was he who having been the son of a wheelwright, caused to be painted on the wall of his bed-chamber, into which no one was allowed to enter but his chaplain, a cart-wheel, over which was written, "*Willegise, memento quid modò sis: quid antea fueris, et quid in brevi necessario futuris sis*;" which artifice of humility was not known till his death, when it seemed so admirable to the emperor Henry, that he ordered that a wheel should in future be the emblem of the city of Mayence, which it retains on its shield to this day.‡

We now come to the frugality and moderation of the clergy in their character of dispensers. St. Jerome wished that Nepotianus might have a table at which the poor and strangers and Christ might be occasional guests. He shows how shameful it would be, if he were to entertain with magnificence the civil magistrates. A secular judge will respect more a continent than a rich cleric, and will more venerate your sanctity than your riches.

By the statutes of the synod of Nantes, no priest was allowed to have more than two dishes at table, excepting when he received the Duke of Brittany and his officers.

It was the custom of the Teutonic knights, that two of them should eat out of one dish, as a mark of poverty and humility. St. Ambrose said, "I think it is

\* Michelet, *Hist. de France*, I. 249.

† Rainald. an. 1294.

‡ *Annal. Hirsaugiens.*

the part of ecclesiastics to decline the banquets of strangers, that they may show hospitality to travellers, and that from that caution there may be no ground of offence given; for the convivial meetings of strangers have occupations belonging to them, and they nourish the desire of feasting. Frequently, too, fables from the world creep in. You cannot close your ears; to prohibit them is thought pride. Cups also creep in contrary to the will." Possidius describes the great simplicity of St. Augustin's life. Dining in common with his clergy, the number of cups was defined for every one; his vessels were of wood or baked earth; his dress neither splendid nor abject. Hear how he speaks of it himself to the people. "I wish that your sanctity would offer such things as I can decently use. For example, I am offered precious linen. Perchance this might become a bishop, though it doth not become Augustin, that is a man who is a sinner, born of poor parents. Men would soon say that I had found precious vestments, which I could never have had either in my father's house or in my secular profession. It would not become me. I ought to have such as I might give to my brother, if he should be in want. I wish to receive such as a priest, such as a deacon or subdeacon can decently possess; for I receive all things in common. If any one should give me better I sell it, that since it cannot be a common vest, the price of the vest may be common. I sell and give to the poor. If it delight him that I should have one, let him give me such as I may wear without blushing; for I confess to you, that I blush to wear precious clothes, because it doth not become this profession, this admonition, these limbs, these white hairs."\*

The fathers of the fourth council of Carthage, decreed, "That the bishop should have his 'hospitiolum' not far from the church; that the bishop should have vile furniture, and keep a poor table, and that he should seek the authority of his dignity by faith and the merits of his life."† Severus Sulpicius, in his life of the blessed Martin, gives an example of the episcopal life, yet when he entertained guests, he had water for their hands, and he washed their feet. Thus he received Sulpicius himself, who says, "Nor did we attempt to contradict him in this, for I felt so oppressed by his authority, that it would have seemed a crime not to acquiesce." Such was also the life of Paulinus, who from a state of great riches, embraced voluntary poverty, and became most rich in sanctity.‡ He sent Severus a present of a wooden dish, and begged in return the gift of an earthen one, saying, "We love fragile vessels, because we know that it is in such we have committed to us the treasure of the Lord." He used to joke about his cook, who could dress vegetables so well that a Roman senator would not disdain them. Faustus, abbot of Lerins, afterwards a bishop, and Lupus, the mirror of French bishops, both retained monastic simplicity in their episcopal houses, as did also the blessed Epiphanius and the holy bishop Germain, who even used to sleep upon a bed of

\* De diversis Serm. 50.

† Can. XIV. XV. Ferr. cap. 71.

‡ S. August. de Civitate Dei, XIX. 20.



ashes.\* St. Hilary, archbishop of Arles, always travelled on foot. Constantine was greatly struck at the humble appearance of the bishops. he supplied them with public conveyances to come to the councils of Nice and Arles. St. Athanasius, recalled from exile, made his triumphal entry into Alexandria mounted upon a poor colt. Generally, in the middle ages, bishops travelled as we still can witness in Italy, mounted on a pacific mule, with a few of their clergy by their side, and others walking before. Gregory Nazianzen described the simplicity of St. Basil's life. "He had but one tunic, one cloak, his bed was upon the ground, his food bread and salt, and his drink the fountain water."† Gregory blames certain false imitators, who would have his dress, and bed, and food, but not his spirit and works; for his manner of life was not studied out of affectation, but perfectly simple and unpremeditated.

Gregory Nyssen gives a similar portrait in his life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, who resolved that there should not be found in his possession on his death where-withal to bury his body; he would hasten on his journeys of charity mounted on a mule. Yet Gregory Nyssen did not disdain a chariot; for these men were equally humble in whatever manner they were carried. St. Chrysostom fled from the luxury of the age, and would therefore eat alone, that he might not furnish a pretence of employing the goods of the church in good living. Palladius the bishop, gives a detailed description of St. Chrysostom's frugal life, yet St. Chrysostom inveighed against certain of the laity, who condemned many of the clergy on the ground of their living well; saying that the priests of the law were far more liberally entertained; and that at all events, those who gave nothing to the clergy, ought not to reprove them for having too much; ‡ and he added to those laymen who condemned the clergy, "When St. Paul said, 'having food and raiment let us therewith be content;' did he speak only to masters? By no means; but to all men. But you say, he takes a bath as I do, he eats, he drinks, he is clothed, he has the care of a house, why should he be a prelate before me? What, had not the apostles freedmen who served them? and when they were on a journey, did not noble men and women entertain them who would have given their lives for them? And if a priest takes care of his body, he is not to be blamed, for if he were to be confined to his bed by sickness, how could he then visit the churches?"

Theodoret records the lives of many other holy bishops, who still retained all the frugality of monastic manners. Such were James of Nisibe, and Aphthonius; and Cassian gives a similar account of Archebius. Such were all these holy bishops, hating and despising what the world loved, and loving what the world scorned and abhorred.

St. Gregory the Great said, that he did not object to occasional feasts of charity, provided "that the life of no absent person were there criticised, that no one were reprehended or ridiculed, and that not the vain fables of secular affairs, but words

\* Surius die 5 Jul.

† Orat. XX

‡ In Epist ad Phil. Hom. IX.

of sacred lessons should be heard at them, when superfluities were not given to the body, but only its weakness refreshed, that it may be more capable of action and the exercise of virtue.”\* St. Gregory was of the most amiable courtesy. When Eulogius, a bishop, was recovered from a fit of sickness, he sent him a horse, but he declared that he himself was not able to ride on an ass, when five were sent to him from Sicily. Fortunatus, a bishop, has written the life of the blessed Germain, bishop of Paris. He says that the holy man had but one tunic and one pallium; that he travelled on horseback, and always either spoke, or sung, or heard some word respecting God; but when he sat down at table, there was immediately a minister to recite divine colloquies.

Bede relates that when the king gave a horse, adorned with royal trappings, to the holy bishop Aidan, that he might use it when necessary, for he always went on foot, Aidan gave him in return a poor man; and when the king complained, he appeased him by saying, “Is that offspring of a mare dearer to thee than a son of God?” The king was seized with such reverence, that he fell on his knees, to the great surprise of the holy man; who expressed his fears privately to others, that so humble a king was not long for this world. St. Cæsareus said, that bishops were bound to the utmost frugality, however rich the church might be. “Not only the tithes are not ours, but whatever we have received from God more than is necessary for us, we ought to give to the poor.”† In these ages the laity were taught that they too, beside their tenths, ought to give their superfluity to the poor. In private, John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, would retain nothing costly for himself. Sometimes a rich citizen would send him a woollen covering for his bed, with a large sum, saying, that if he loved him, he would use it. John complied for one night only, and his domestics heard him condemn himself for such luxury, while so many poor were starving with cold. At dawn of day he started from that precious bed, and sent it to be sold for the poor. Pardulus, bishop of Lyons, in his life of Hinemar, archbishop of Rheims, gives a wonderful account of the simplicity and austerity of that holy man’s living. In the time of Louis the Pious, the clergy were ordered to lay aside all belts and ornaments of gold and silver,‡ which when Tarasius succeeded to the patriarchal see of Constantinople, he also prohibited to all members of the clergy.§ Balsamon, illustrating the canon of a council, shows the indecorum of a clerk wearing a military ornament, and the fathers of the seventh general council expressed the same sentiment, adding, “all marks of boasting and bodily ornament are foreign from the sacerdotal order.”|| Nevertheless, Ives, bishop of Chartres, writing to Pope Paschal the Second, appears to have been persuaded that, in his age, it was necessary to keep up the respect of men for the episcopal office, by some exterior marks of dignity;¶ and this is the more remark-

\* Leg. II. Epist. 37.

§ Surius, die 25 Febr.

† Hom. IX.

|| Can. XVI.

‡ Duchesne, tom. II. p. 298.

¶ Epist. CCXL.

able, as Ives was deeply learned in the ancient discipline of the church, and most ardent in his love of holy poverty. St. Bernard would allow of no secular vanities in those who held benefices. "It is granted that you should live of the altar, but it does not follow that you are to luxuriate of the altar. Whatever you retain of the altar besides necessary food and simple raiment, is not yours ; it is rapine, it is sacrilege."\* His contemporary, Gilbert, bishop of London, gave all that he possessed to the poor, and lived in voluntary poverty.

Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluny, would never suffer any other but a wooden cross to be presented to the dying. When the blessed Antonine, archbishop of Florence, died, all that was found in his palace consisted in some of the poorest furniture and a mule, and he was, therefore, buried at the public expense. The blessed Laurence Justinian, the first of the Venetian patriarchs, had only a family of five servants ; his table was most frugal, and though constantly reading or writing, he had not even any books of his own. Thomas Cantipratensis shows that Maurice, archbishop of Rouen, prescribed to his steward, that out of an annual supply of 12,000 livres, he was to devote two or three thousand to the expenses of his family, and that the rest was for the poor.† He also mentions a certain Dominican, who became bishop of Bosnia, and when he had a yearly return of 8000 marcs, hardly expended any thing on himself or his family, not even keeping a horse, but only an ass, which used to carry his books and sacred furniture ; he made his visitations on foot, accompanied with brethren of his order, giving great alms, and preaching by the way.‡ St. Bernard commemorates the simplicity of the blessed Malachy, archbishop of Armagh, who reserved nothing fixed for himself, no allowance for his table, not even a house, spending his whole time visiting different parts of his province, living by the work of his hands, and sleeping by night in the churches. He travelled on foot, a bishop and a legate. Not different in manner from St. Malachy, was St. Charles, archbishop of Milan. No one appeared in his house but clerks, or such at least as wore a clerical dress. No luxuries were on his table, no exquisite paintings in his hall, although they greatly delighted him ; but the walls were naked and white. Cardinal Ximenes, archbishop of Toledo, would always travel on foot, or riding on an ass. No fine furniture, no golden or silver vessels appeared in his palace ; and under the purple which became his office, he wore the habit of his order, and slept upon the poor bed which was prescribed by the rules of St. Francis. To him Wadding applies the description of Agrippa, saying that he was always nearer to rusticity than to delights.§ Lastly, all the ancient canons relative to the simplicity and frugality belonging to the sacerdotal manners, were confirmed by the council of Trent,|| which pronounced "that they should hold out a model to all other men, of frugality, modesty, and continence ; that the bishops should be content with

\* Epist. II.

† Lib. I. cap. 8.

‡ Lib. II. c. 57.

§ Annal. Minorum, vols, XV. and XVI.

|| Sess. 22. cap. 10.



modest furniture and with simple fare ; and that nothing should ever appear in their houses or mode of life which was contrary to this holy institute, and which did not bespeak simplicity, the zeal for God, and a contempt for vanity.”\*

By the council of Agatha, as also by that of Epaone in 517, bishops, priests, and deacons, are forbidden, on pain of suspension, to keep dogs and birds for hunting. St. Boniface, archbishop of Mayence, prohibited the clergy from all hunting.† Similar prohibitions were made by various councils.‡ By the council of Trull, even the laity were forbidden to appear at public spectacles of dancing ; and the councils of Spain were most severe upon them who assisted at the profane dances before the churches on the festivals of the saints. St. Ambrose says, “We find no just man in the number of hunters throughout the whole series of the Scriptures.§ The Pythagoreans did not allow themselves to hunt ;|| so that at least the ancient philosophy would approve of the ecclesiastical discipline in this respect, which might be irksome to mere solitary rustics.

By the council of Macon, in 585, bishops were forbidden to guard their houses with dogs, as being contrary to hospitality. The ancient canons equally prohibited the clergy from all games at dice or tables, or chess, which were also forbidden by the laws of Justinian, and by the apostolic canons, the prohibition, however, was extended equally to the laity.

St. Cæsareus, at Arles, had always a table prepared for guests and clergymen who travelled. “While he lived no one came to Arles as to a strange city, but as to his own house.”¶ At these meals there was always a sacred lesson read aloud, according to universal usage in Episcopal houses, even when strangers were entertained. The council of Toledo ordered that the Holy Scriptures should be read aloud at the table of bishops,\*\* from whose houses the custom passed to the Court of Seculars, for not only Charlemagne when entertaining kings, and private noblemen at their feudal manors, but also the Greek emperors at Constantinople, had always something solemn from the holy fathers read aloud at table.

St. Gregory of Tours describes the monastery and hospice built by Domnolus, bishop of Mans. As the poor were often excluded from entering by the guards who kept watch upon the walls, he built the hospice without the walls, and placed there twenty monks and an abbot whose duty it was to show hospitality to the poor.†† Gregory the Great entertained all strangers who came to Rome ;‡‡ and he gave attention to cause other bishops to exercise hospitality. When he invited Marianus, archbishop of Ravenna, to Rome, to consult the physicians, he advised him to appoint some person in his absence who should supply his place in enter-

\* Sess 25. Thomassin, III. Lib. III. cap. 24. cap. 41.

† Epist. CV.

‡ Concil. Epaonens. Can. 4 ; Concil. Liptinens. Can. 2 ; Concil. Suessiones. Can. 3 ; Concil. Trull. Can. 51. liber Pœnitent. Gregorii, P. III ; Concil. Turonens, III. Can. 7 ; Concil. Gall. tom. II. p. 157.

§ Amb. in Psal. 118. Oct. 8. D. 86. c. 11. || Jamblich. Cap. 28. ¶ Vita ejus, Lib. I. c. 31.

\*\* Can. 7.

†† Surius die 16 Maiæ.

‡‡ John. Diacon. Lib. II. c. 19.

taining guests at Ravenna. Pope Martin replied to certain imperial questions as to the reception that the patriarch Pyrrus would meet at Rome, "Do you not know the Roman church? Every wretched man that comes there is received to hospitality; all things needful are given to him. St. Peter rejects no one, sends away no one without gifts. The whitest bread and diverse kind of wines are given to him and to all who belong to him. If this be done to miserable persons, what expense would be spared on the reception of such an honorable guest as a bishop?"\* St. Benedict prescribed in his rule the constant practice of hospitality, especially to the poor and to strangers, because in them Christ is more immediately received.† Isidore admits of no bounds to Episcopal hospitality, from the motive of these words of Christ, "Hospes fui et suscepistis me." A laic receiving one or two fulfils the duty of hospitality. A bishop, if he doth not receive all men is inhuman.‡ If all the faithful should desire to hear that sentence, Hospes fui, addressed to themselves, how much more the bishop whose hostel ought to be open to every one.

Hospitality became abused in some of the monasteries of Spain, so that the monks were forbidden by a council to receive any seculars excepting the poor, and those of such known virtue and religion, that there would be no interruption to the silence and the sacred leisure of the cloister.§ The councils and capitularies were also express in forbidding priests and monks to enter a tavern for sake of eating and drinking.|| The councils of Rheims and Francfort repeated this prohibition, but cases of necessity on a journey were always excepted. A certain bishop wished to make a distinction between dice and chess, at the latter of which he had played, but he recognized his error, and had for his penance to recite the Psalter three times, to wash the feet of twelve poor, and to give money to each of them. This was prescribed by Peter Damian. The councils even included chess in their prohibition.¶ Recreations that resembled an occupation, constant society, and incessant greetings, would have but ill agreed with the office of those who were charged to salute no man by the way, and who were forbidden to pass from house to house. The chief men in philosophy, according to the discipline of Pythagoras, were to know nothing of the Forum or of the courts of justice, or of the state councils, to keep aloof from political factions, and those concerned with the creation of magistrates, and not so much as to dream of suppers or other feasts.\*\* Cicero thinks that Erucius fully cleared Sexius Roscius from the charge of luxury, when he said that he was never even present at any banquet.†† These views harmonized with the ecclesiastical discipline. By the canons of the council of Lyons

\* Baron. an. 645.

† Cap. 53. 56.

‡ De Offic. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. 5.

§ Concil. Matisconens. Can. 5; Concil. Suessionens. Can. 3; Concil. Herdens. Can. 1; Concil. Gall. tom. II. p. 94. 152. 232; Capitular. Carol. Mag. Lib. I. c. 70. and Lib. VI. c. 285, 286; Lib. VII. c. 91, 92, 93, 103, 104; Concil. Mogun. Can 17.

|| Concil. Gall. tom. II. p. 136. Capitular. Lib. I. c. 14.

¶ Concil. Biterrens. an. 1255.

\*\* Jamblich, Adhortat. ad Philosoph. cap. 14.

†† Pro. S. Roscio.

in the year 475, and by the council of Agde in 506, clerks were forbidden to appear at banquets : by the canons of Chrodogang, all assemblies of men, whether courts or tribunal, or feasts, or convivial meetings, are to be shunned by them as so many chains of pleasures. The company of seculars, and especially of the great, is to be avoided, say the English canons.\* By the canons of the council of Orleans, in the year 533, it was ordered that no priest should reside with seculars without the permission of his bishop. "The convivial meetings of seculars are to be avoided," says St. Jerome, writing to a priest, "and especially of those who are puffed up with honors."†

Hospitality, however, was of great moment in the institutions of clerical life. When bishops travelled they were entertained by other bishops : hence the complaints of St. Chrysostom to Pope Innocent concerning Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, because coming to Constantinople he had not descended at the bishop's house, where all things were ready to refresh him.‡ St. Augustin had always meat for his guests. Nazianzen says that Julian wished to inspire the heathens with this spirit of hospitality, but that the Gentile superstition refused to imitate it.§ The Agapæ, however, were attended with such abuses that St. Ambrose and St. Augustin succeeded in abolishing them.|| Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, gave Maximian, a bishop, a letter of introduction to Cæsareus, archbishop of Arles, in which he says, "a priest can never be called a foreigner wherever the Catholic Church is found."¶

Charlemagne used often to be entertained at bishops' houses, where he was always well received. It was understood that all persons of public office coming to his court, or returning from it, should be received in the bishops' palaces or in monasteries ; but to meet this claim there was an express law in favor of the hosts. "Similarly also we decree that the manner of silence and of canonical quiet is to be observed so as to be disturbed by no exterior guest."\*\*\* Wealth is exhausted by secular ostentation, not by Episcopal charity, so that while kings and nobles were well entertained, there were never wanting supplies for innumerable poor. This discipline of "gist" is hardly found out of France, where the royal majesty and the episcopacy were so closely united in sentiment and object.

In the time of Charlemagne it appears that the council insisted upon four things to be observed in Episcopal hospitality—frugality in the fare, the presence of the poor, and of strangers travelling, and spiritual reading.†† There is the following law of Charles the Bald. "We wish that priests, who ought to show a good example to all men, may be hospitable. Let them also admonish their parishioners

\* Crodogangi Regula Canonic. cap. 58. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. I.

† Epist. XXXIV. ad Nepotian. ‡ Socrat. Lib. VII. c. 4. 11. 13. § Orat. I. in Jul. || Baron. an. 291. ¶ Epist. IX. Concil. Cæsaraugust. III. Can. 3.

\*\* Thomass. III. Lib. I. cap. 39.

†† Concil. Remens. II. Can. 7. 18 ; Concil. Turonens. III. Can. 5, 6 ; Concil. Paris, VI. Can. 14, Concil. Aquisgran. II. Can. 1. 3, Capitular. I. c. 75.



to be hospitable, and never to refuse a lodging to those who are travelling. And that all occasion of rapine may be taken away, let nothing be sold dearer to wayfarers than it was in the markets: but if they wish to sell dearer, let the travellers refer this to the priest, and let them sell according to his sentence, with humanity.”\*

Wherever there was a parish priest there was a house to receive strangers and the poor, and a hospice for the purpose was always adjoining a cathedral church.† All this may still be verified by experience in other lands. From Engelberg, with one companion, I crossed the Storek Alp, and descended on a summer's evening into the Melch Thal which joins the vale of Sarnen. Klopel hath but a few houses and a church, but the curate remarked us from his window, and invited us into his house. As the rain had fallen in torrents during many hours, we had made bare our feet, and having a careless livery, that argued no great wealth in the possessors, that hospitality had all the merit of being offered to the poor. Never shall I forget the gracious benevolence of that good priest, and his holy simplicity; for when the bell tolled during supper, he invited us to repeat with him the angel's salutation. The council of Trent confirmed all the ancient canons enforcing the exercise of hospitality,‡ and especially prescribing it to bishops, to be observed without respect of persons. It was the ancient rule that the poor were first to be received, and that the rich were not to be cast out. The hospitality of the church to the poor was for their relief, that to the rich was like a snare to entice them to be bountiful, that they might contribute to support the poor, and also that the sanctity of the cloister might produce a salutary impression upon the minds of the rich, and gradually win them from the world, so that seculars themselves might learn from frequenting these seminaries to love and practise the simplicity, the religious quiet, the piety and the heavenly conversation of holy men. S. Liudger used to invite both the poor and the rich to dinner, and during the banquet he used to supply them also with the sweet delights of spiritual food.

It must, however, have tried the zeal and charity of holy men, when to further their devout object, they were obliged to conform to popular customs, which were semi-barbarous. William of Malmesbury, in his life of Wolstan, bishop of Worcester, says that, “he was most abstemious at table, although in his hall, after the manner of the Saxons, men used to drink whole hours after dinner, while he sitting by would ruminate on the Psalms. Yet in his order he would pretend to drink; others poured out foaming cups; he holding his poor little vase would invite them to hilarity, satisfying more the custom of the country than the judgment of his own mind.”§ The house of S. Charles at Milan, was open to all the world. “There,” says Giosso, “were poor people, and pilgrims, and strangers of distant na-

\* Capit. Carol. Calv. p. 471.

†Regular. Crodogan. cap. 45; Concil. Aquisg. 141.

‡ Cap. 23.

§ Willielmi Malmesburiensis de Gestis Pontificum Anglorum, Lib. IV.

tions, cardinals, bishops, prelates, vicars, and procurators, and sometimes he would give these guests horses and money to enable them to pursue their journey.”\* There are extant letters of St. Charles, relating how he received some English students on their way to Rome, and saying how he wished that in future all who passed would visit him, that he might entertain them while at Milan. Wilfred, a young Englishman, being on his pilgrimage to Rome came to Lyons, where he and all his companions were received by the Archbishop Dalfinus, who was so pleased with his gracious appearance and manners, that he proposed detaining him, offering him his niece in marriage, and the government of a great part of Gaul, and promising that he would be a father to him; but Wilfred replied, “I must fulfil my vows to God, which require that I should visit the apostolic seat, in order that I may learn the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, to the end that our nation may better serve God, and that I may be able to expect the reward promised to him who leaves father and mother that he may possess eternal life.” On his return, however, he remained three years with the archbishop, learning many things from the learned doctors who surrounded him.”†

Episcopal liberality in the middle ages was worthy of kings. Hear what says the historian who relates the coronation of Philip I. at Rheims in the year 1059, after describing the solemn ceremony: “All these things passed with the greatest devotion and the most lively joy. The Archbishop Gervais received all the assistants with kindness, and entertained them largely at his own expense, although he was not bound to receive any one unless the king himself; but he did it for the honor of his church and through generosity.”‡

We have already seen enough to be convinced that the indirect influence of the clergy during the middle ages must have been immense; it remains to examine the direct and specific channels by which the justice of those who were separate to the church was made to flow through the different members of the Christian state. These may be considered in twofold capacity, ordinary, universal, and what may be termed devotional, beyond what was of general obligation to meet particular occasions. Instances of the latter might early be multiplied from the books not only of ecclesiastical, but also of civil history. St. Columban in the fifth century was born in Ireland, in the Province of Leinster; he left his country to preach through Gaul, where he raised himself powerful enemies by boldly admonishing sinners. Fredegaire says in his history, “In the fourteenth year of the reign of Theodoric, the reputation of St. Columban had spread through all the cities and provinces of Gaul and Germany. Being universally venerated the king Theodoric used often to visit him at Luxeuil, in order humbly to beg the favor of his prayers. Having received him frequently in his monastery, the man of God began to question him and to ask how he could deliver himself up to adultery with

\* Thomass. Pars III. Lib. III. cap. 47. 49.

† Mabillon Acta, S. Ordinis Benedict. Sæc. IV. Pars I. cap. 4.

‡ Collect des Men. relat. à l' Hist. de France, tom. VII. 92.

concubines rather than enjoy the happiness of marriage." You see how the action of the clergy commences under the form of hospitality. Behold it now in the casual intercourse of life. It happened once that St. Valery, abbot of St. Valery of Picardy, who died in 622, when returning on foot from a place called Cayeux to his monastery, in the winter time stopped to warm himself, on account of the extreme cold, in a house by the way side. The host and his companions, who ought to have received such a guest with great respect, began on the contrary to speak with the judge of the place in a very light and improper manner. Faithful to his custom of always applying to corrupt and hideous wounds the salutary remedy of the Divine word, he endeavored to correct them, saying, "My sons, have you not seen in the Gospel that in the day of judgment we shall have to render an account of every light word?" but they, despising his admonitions, abandoned themselves more and more to gross and immodest language, for the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. Upon which he said, "I had wished, on account of the cold, to warm a little my fatigued body, but your guilty discourse obliges me to withdraw still frozen as I am," and so saying he went out of the house.\* Let us take an instance from the Saxon chronicle. "Eadbald, king of Kent, renounced his baptism and lived in a heathen manner, so that he took to wife his father's widow. Then Laurentius, who was archbishop in Kent, resolved to depart southward over sea, and abandon every thing. But there came to him in the night the Apostle Peter, and severely chastised him, because he would so desert the flock of God. And he charged him to go to the king, and teach him the right belief. And he did so; and the king returned to the right belief."

S. Aldric, bishop of Sens, as he sat one day near the church of St. Stephen, saw pass a man named Marrymardus, whose countenance and gait gave evident indication of his mind's insolence. The prelate not daunted by his terrible looks, proceeded to admonish him, that if he had such authority over others he ought to show that he could govern also himself, and to remind him that he was but dust and ashes, and thus pouring in wine and oil into the wounds of this poor man, he succeeded at length in removing pride and vanity from his heart: insomuch that this haughty governor of the state submitted himself afterwards to the humble condition of a monk.†

When Philip I. was endeavoring to have his marriage with the virtuous Bertha declared null, through an adulterous passion for Bertrade, wife of the count of Anjou, and had even summoned the archbishop of Rheims, Ives de Chartres, and other prelates, to assist at his marriage, he found in Ives an insuperable obstacle. This worthy successor of the apostles immediately wrote to him declaring that he would never consent to be present at such an act. "If a council were to be summoned," said he, "it might be examined whether you can lawfully be divorced according to the canons; but now, since I am absolutely called

\* Acta S. Ord. S. Bened. tom. II. 86.

† Mabillon, Acta S. Ord. Bened. sæcul. IV. Pars I.



to Paris, to assist at your marriage with one whom I know not whether she can be your wife, on account of my conscience, which I must preserve before God, and on account of my fame, which a good priest should maintain before those who are without, I would rather that a millstone were tied to my neck, and that I were cast into the sea, rather than by me the weakest of the weak should be offended.”\* At the same time he wrote to the archbishop of Rheims, to convince him that he could not in conscience make this marriage, and to the archbishop of Lyons, legate of the Pope, to inspire him with zeal to oppose such a scandalous outrage to justice and religion. These letters had full success, for these prelates fulfilled their duty admirably.†

But Ives de Chartres distinguished himself above them all by his courage in executing the orders of the Pope, and exhorting the king to penance; for which he was cast into prison; and when the people of Chartres were for delivering him by force, he appeased them, and declared that he would never return to his church by violence, and that he only sought their prayers for his deliverance. From his prison he wrote to the king a noble letter, concluding with saying, that he hoped, from the mercy of God, that his majesty would know one day that the wounds of those who love us, are better than the deceitful kisses of those who flatter us. In the council of Poitiers, the king was a second time excommunicated, notwithstanding the most violent opposition by the Duke of Aquitaine and a crowd of seculars, who attempted even to kill the legates, by mounting into the high galleries of the church, and thence casting down stones upon them when they saw them about to fulminate the sentence. One ecclesiastic, who stood at their side, was killed, and his blood sprinkled the altar, but the intrepid legates, to show how little they regarded the stones, which flew on all sides, even took off their mitres and proceeded with the sentence, so that the fury of the seditious was in vain. The Count was obliged to make satisfaction, and the king and Bertrade incurred the penalty. In course of time, when Philip evinced real sorrow, and difficulties were needlessly thrown in the way of his being absolved, it was Ives de Chartres who came forward in his behalf in the council of Beaugency, rebuked those who were taking advantage of his distress, and seizing him by the hand, raised him from his knees, saying, let us depart, sire, I charge myself with your absolution; thus fulfilling what he had predicted to the king, that the wounds of a friend were better than the kiss of flatterers, for then had all men forsaken him. At length after solemnly promising to leave Bertrade for ever, the king barefooted, and with all signs of a true penitent, coming before the Episcopal assembly, and begging pardon of the Church for the scandal he had given, was absolved along with Bertrade by the legate.

St. Raymond, of Pennafert, born of that illustrious house in Catalonia, in the year 1175, which is allied to the kings of Arragon, had entered the order of

\* Ivonis Carnot. Epist. XV

† Hist. de Suger, Lib. I.

St. Dominick, and had been called to the court of James II. king of Arragon. Finding that the king would not attend to the advice which he gave him in the affairs of his conscience, he left the court. This noble firmness, which God approved by a striking miracle, brought the king to himself, and caused his return to the way of justice.

Pope Clement VI. than whom, as Petrarch says, no one could ever have better merited the name, ordered Casimir, King of Poland, to send back his mistress, and to be faithful to his wife. This prince at first refused, but at length submitted, and underwent the penance imposed upon him. When king Richard was setting a bad example to the army of Paladins during their stay in Sicily, a holy man, Joachim, came forth from the grottoes of Calabria to remind the pilgrims of their solemn duty, and to restrain the scandal of their lives.\*

St. Antony of Padua heard that the tyrant Eccelinus had lately put a number of men to death at Verona. Immediately he went to him, and entering his presence said, "There is hanging over thee, thou fell tyrant, the horrible doom of Almighty God. How long wilt thou persist in shedding innocent blood?" All persons present expected nothing else but that Eccelinus would order his immediate execution. The event, however, was not so; for like a lamb he humbled himself before the man of God, prostrated himself on the ground, confessed aloud his iniquities, and promised amendment. In fact, during the rest of his life, he refrained from many crimes which he had before been in the habit of committing.† Ere we come to the end of our course, we shall see what were the sufferings of the clergy in consequence of their zeal in this respect; nevertheless, we may admire here the beauty of these instances, where the proud bold baron, or the mighty ruler of the earth, is seen to hold their temper in such high respect, and curb himself even of his natural scope, when they did cross his humor. Unlike the hero of Corioli, the warrior who would have scorned the force of domestic affections, and remained inflexible before the tears of suppliant women, became gentle when confronted with the plain heroic greatness of the Catholic priest, the humble minister of the spiritual society whose power is still hidden here below.

Glaber Radulphus, a monk of Cluni, who wrote in the reign of king Robert, relates that a count of Anjou built a church near Tours, in honor of the celestial hierarchy. As he had oppressed his people with many injuries, he thought by building this church to reconcile himself to God. But when he asked the bishop of Tours to dedicate it, that prelate refused to do so, until the count had restored to the poor people all that he had tyrannically extorted from them. Of the zeal and ingenious charity of the clergy in converting men to justice, history can furnish endless details.

Bourdoise, a missionary priest in the reign of Louis XIII., on one occasion being

\* Brompton Chronic. an. 1191.

† Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, an. 1231.

unable in the morning to gain the attention of certain villagers, went in the evening, and finding them playing at bowls, played with them, and having persuaded the peasant who was on his side, he made use of him to persuade the others, and so succeeded in making them all listen to him, and thus furnished them with spiritual succor.\* St. Francis Xavier used to visit persons of the most abandoned manners, pretending to know nothing of their course of life, and by degrees introducing subjects of piety till he converted them.† When sailing from Cochin to Cambaya there was in the ship a Portuguese gentleman who made a boast of his impiety. The saint immediately marked him out for his companion, and endeavored to please him by agreeable conversation, but whenever he uttered a word about salvation, the other would not hear him. Xavier was not to be discouraged : he continued to treat him with kindness. On landing at Camanor they two went alone to walk in a wood of palm trees, and there the saint took occasion to display the fervor of his charity, for after giving himself the discipline and then making a prayer to Jesus Christ, the gentleman was so astonished and moved, that he threw himself at his feet and made his confession in the very grove, and ever after lived like a good Christian.

There was a Portuguese gentleman at Meliapor who led a scandalous life, keeping a house like a seraglio. St. Francis Xavier came self-invited, and prepared to dine with him : he spoke on common subjects, and finally went away without saying a word respecting his course of life. The gentleman believed that this silence of the saint boded him no good, and that he had nothing further to expect but a disastrous death and an eternal ruin. With this thought he hastened to visit him : "O my father," said he, "how your silence has spoken to my heart ! I have not had a moment's repose since you left my house ! O, if my ruin be not absolutely determined, behold me at your feet, and do with me what you may judge best for my soul : I will obey you implicitly." The saint embraced him, and after reminding him that the mercy of God was infinite, disposed him to a general confession, which was followed by his total conversion to a holy life. Three famous robbers on Mont Casal, were converted by the humility and charity of St. Francis of Assisium. The holy man began by sending them bread and wine, and messages, entreating their forgiveness, because the father, guardian of one convent, had closed the doors against them in his absence.‡ On journeys St. Francis and his companions always with salutary and simple words exhorted every one they met to the love of God and to penance for sins. The Catholic priest might boldly admonish men when clearly it was nothing but the sincerest love which induced him to administer correction. "Nor ought it to seem too laborious to doctors," says St. Odo, abbot of Cluny, "to pour out tears for the conversion of sinners, when He that was made man, and created all things,

\* Lebeuf, *Hist. du Diocese de Paris*, Tom. VII. 66.

† Bouhours, *Vie D. S. F. X.* 16.

‡ *Les Chroniques. des Frères Mineurs*, Lib. I. c. 86.



poured out his blood for our sins upon the cross.”\* Moreover, the success of the clergy on such occasions must have been greatly facilitated in consequence of their generous and heroic character, which could not but incline men to listen to their admonitions ; for it did not escape observation, that in the worst of times, all the sweet and noble virtues of humanity, enriched with the unction of grace, were sure to be displayed to the consolation of wretched men, by ecclesiastics.

Poets remarked that some clergyman of holy reverence was always found constant to a fallen king, and what shall we say of their constancy in friendship ? The famous John of Salisbury followed St. Thomas into exile at the risk of his life. When the beautiful and virtuous Adelaide, daughter of Ridolphus, king of Burgundy, and widow of Lothaire, king of Italy, had refused to unite herself to the son of Berenger, who had caused the ruin of her husband, and perhaps his death, she was plundered of all her riches, and shut up by the Berengers in a fort, on the lake of Garda, where Willa, the wife of Berenger, went so far as to ill-treat her even with blows, as is related by the nun Rosvida, a poetess of that age, as also by Odo, abbot of Cluny. After remaining there with a female servant, for a considerable time, it was a priest named Martin who succeeded in releasing them, by making an aperture in the wall, and a subterraneous mine. The illustrious captives and their brave deliverer hid themselves in a wood near the lake of Garda, where if it had not been for the succor of a fisherman, they would probably have perished with hunger. She was subsequently admitted by Azzo into the strong fortress of Carossa, which Berenger besieged with the hope of recovering her person ; but the castle was impregnable. Otho, coming from Germany, set her at liberty, and admiring her virtue and beauty, made her his wife. Essentially indeed the clerical was an heroic character. If, by the canon law, persons who evinced a disposition contrary to ecclesiastical mildness, were irregular, and could not be ordained,† on the other hand, by the sacred canons, all clerks were to be deposed who were known to be inclined to flattery. The words of St. Athanasius to the Abbot Dracontius, were strictly an ecclesiastical axiom, οὐ πρόπει τῷ καιρῷ δουλεύειν, ἀλλὰ τῷ Κυρίῳ. Men of chivalrous generosity could not but love a priesthood the members of which were even distinguished by the most lofty and delicate sense of honor. Gilles de Rome, styled the blessed doctor, prior of the Augustinian hermits, and hearer of St. Thomas of Aquin, in the schools of Paris, though of the Colonna family, the preceptor of Philip-le-Bel, for whose use he composed his book on the government of princes, nevertheless wrote in defence of Pope Boniface VIII., after the outrage committed against him by his relation, under the auspices of his royal patron, who for this noble act would never forgive him, or suffer him to become a member of the sacred college.‡

Henry IV., before besieging Rouen, took possession of Louviers by means of

\* S. Odonis Collat. Lib. III. Bibliothec. Cluniacens.

† Joan. Devot. Instit. Can. Lib. I. tit. VII. 1.

‡ Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Paris, tom. III.

a priest named Jean de la Tour, who betrayed the gates to him. A prebendal stall in the cathedral of Evreux, was his recompense from the king; but the clergy of Evreux, not being able to endure the presence of this man, dispensed him from his residence. As, notwithstanding this privilege, he used to come every year to assist at the office of the holy week, and of Easter, the canons conspired together, and agreed to absent themselves towards the end of the psalm which precedes the Benedictus at Lauds, in order that the chorist might bear to him the anthem, *Traditur autem*, which is sung at this canticle. The traitor was thus surprised, and forced to sing his own condemnation, and the complaint which he made afterwards only turned to his greater confusion. During the middle ages, fidelity in the accomplishment of all the sacerdotal duties ensured to the clergy an immense influence, and gave them a prodigious moral power. Truly an archbishop of Canterbury might boldly defend the rights of his church, when, like St. Thomas, he had been accustomed to sit at supper surrounded with all the poor of the city: an archbishop of Canterbury, of whom Petrus Cellensis, abbot of St. Remy, would say, that "he naked was following Christ hanging naked on the cross, and imitating the vestiges of the ancient saints, might, without any misgivings, oppose himself as a wall for the house of Israel."† Pascasius Radbert, describing the Abbot Wala, asks, "but how could such a humble man, and one so dead to the world, be found speaking with such boldness before senators and emperors? He it was whom neither the terror or threats, nor the force of kings, nor the hope of what is present, nor the fear of what is future, nor the promise of advantages, nor the fear of any kind of punishment, nor any authority, could ever recall from the charity of Christ, from the love of his country and of his people, from the love of the churches, and from the faith which he owed to the emperor. Therefore, like another Jeremiah, he constantly spoke such things, lifting his voice against the crimes and abuses of the palace."‡ Such men were not likely to prove timid friends to truth, osiers that could never make beams to bear stress in the church. They were men ready to make any sacrifice, and who very often had, at an early period of their course sacrificed all the human and earthly ties that could have withheld them from performing their divine duty. When the emperor Constance required pope Liberius at Milan to subscribe the condemnation of St. Athanasius, on pain of exile, the pontiff replied, "I have already bid adieu to my brethren who are at Rome; the laws of the Church are dearer to me than a residence in this city." They sought nothing personal from kings. St. Hilary of Poitiers wrote to the emperor Constance in these terms. "You bow your head to receive the benediction of the bishops, and you trample under foot their faith."

We come, in fine, to consider the direct and ordinary method of extending the

\* Hist. d'Evreux, 360.

† Petri Cellensis. Epist. Lib. I. 10.

‡ Mabillon, Sæcul. IV. pars I. Acta S. Ord. Bened.

influence of ecclesiastical justice to all members of the body of Christ, which was by evangelizing the nations, and announcing to every creature the word of life.

The history of the preachers and apostles of the Christian religion, during the middle ages, is even, in a poetical and philosophic point of view, a rich mine, of the existence or extent of which but few modern readers seem at all aware. I can but indicate it, and as it were point out the spot, but without attempting to explore it. What a life, from infancy to martyrdom, was that of St. Adalbert, bishop of Prague, the first apostle of Prussia, in the tenth century, son of Count Slawnik, in Bohemia, and closely related to the sovereigns of Bohemia and of Germany, as given by Canisius and others! The pages of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, or the acts of the saints of the order of St. Benedict, which at one time embraced nearly the whole church, or the annals of the Camaldolese, which relate the preaching and martyrdom of these servants of God, cannot be read without experiencing the same impressions as are produced by hearing the first victories of Christ's messengers.

The apostle of Livonia was Meinhard, an Augustinian monk of the monastery of Sigeberg, in Holstein. Already an aged man, he renounced the peace of his cloister for the devout and perilous enterprise of converting that heathen people from whom he had nothing to expect but martyrdom. Independent of all other evidence, a true miracle, a palpable interposition of a supernatural hand, must be recognized in the zeal and perseverance with which these monks of the tenth and eleventh centuries offered themselves to death for the Gospel in all the northern lands of Germany, the inhabitants of which, on account of their ferocity and impure superstition, are styled by Bishop Christian, in his *Chronicle*, "the children of Belial." Christian, the Cistercian monk, who brought the heavenly light to so many people of the north, came out of the beautiful cloister Oliva, near Danzig, in Pomerania, which was one of the first foundations there on its conversion to Christianity. Among the holy missionaries along with Albert the bishop, went one who had formerly won renown in arms, as a noble knight in the host of Henry the Lion. This was Bernard de Lippe, in Westphalia, who was now a Cistercian monk.\* In the year 1225, William, a bishop and legate of the pope, came into that part of Prussia which is beyond Poland and Pomerania, "where," says the monk Alberic, "not by strength, but by wisdom and genius, he converted many of the Pagans, whose language he in a great measure learned. It was for this end that with great labor he translated into the barbarous tongue, Donatus, the same "who deigned to put his hand to the first art," as St. Bonaventure says, on pointing him out to Dante, in *Paradise*. William of Modena visited Livonia also as legate, admonishing the Teutonic knights to govern the newly converted under the soft yoke of faith with mildness, not to oppress them, by exacting tithes, or laying any other burden on them, but in the meek spirit of Christianity to make happy the newly planted churches.† In the eleventh century, Werner,

\* *Chronica, Montis Sereni.*

† Voigt *Geschichte Preussens*. II. 315.



Bishop of Merseburg, who, in his age, like a heavenly star illuminated the whole church, a man of excellent merit in God, and a most vigilant executor of his duty, was inflamed with holy zeal to convert the Pagans. Though ignorant of the Slavonic language, he was most anxious to impart the Christian faith to that people, and he caused some books to be made in that language with a Latin translation; so that what he did not understand himself he enabled others to understand.\* In their apostolic labors these holy missionaries seemed to place all their trust in the efficacy of just men's prayers.

St. Boniface, while among the wild Saxons, addresses an epistle to all the most reverend bishops, venerable priests, white-robed deacons, canons and clerks, to the mitred abbots, and humble abbesses, and the monks subject to them, to the devout virgins consecrated to God, and to all the handmaidens of Christ, and generally to all the Catholics fearing God, of the race and land of the English, imploring them to remember him in their prayers, that our God and Lord Jesus Christ, who wishes all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of God, may convert the hearts of the Pagans to the Catholic faith.† The fame of St. Boniface's sanctity drew crowds of holy men into Germany from Britain, some to discharge the office of readers, others of writers, and others to exercise various arts, many of whom lived in subjection to him in his regular community, while others dispersing themselves, preached the word of God through the whole region of the Hessians and Thuringians.‡ These were the conquerors whom our ancestors deemed deserving of their highest honors. St. Cuthbert writes to the bishop Lullus, expressing the joy which England derives from having been deemed worthy to give birth to St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, who by his preaching and example, had converted such a multitude of Pagans to God; and he relates, that in a general synod in England, it had been resolved to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, and to choose him, along with the blessed Gregory and Augustin, as patrons of the English.§ The life of Valentine, the apostle of Passau, who had come from Britain or Ireland, was found in the year 1120, inscribed in ancient characters upon a leaden tablet inclosed within his tomb, in that church. It began thus, "*Venit ab oceano vir humilis Valentinus nomine, in civitatem Petaviam prædicandi gratia.*" This tablet was probably placed in his grave in the year 768, when the body of the saint was translated from Trent to Passau.|| An epitaph in the cathedral of Saltzburg, by an ancient poet, supposed to be Alcuin, attests the coming of Virgilius from Ireland, for the sake of preaching to that people—

"Quæ cernis veniens, O lector, inclyta tecta,  
Virgilius fecit, Domini deductus amore  
Egregius Præsul meritis et moribus almus :

\* Winnigstadii Chron. Halberst.  
§ Id. Epist. LXX.

† S. Bonif. Epist. VI.

‡ S. Wilibaldus Vit. S. Bonif.

|| Germania Sacra. tom. I.

Protulit in lucem quem mater Hibernia primum.  
 Sed peregrina petens Christi jam propter amorem;  
 Delicias mundi, et patriam contempsit amatam ;  
 Per mare, per terras, partes pervenit in istas  
 Multiplicare studens tota virtute talentum  
 Doctrinæ, populis et spargere semina vitæ.\*

The annals which record the preaching of the Franciscans, and Dominicans, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when they sent missionaries to the Tartars, to the Armenians, and to the Sarrassins of Africa, and Palestine, and Babylon, as well as to the Lithuanians, and other nations of the north, many of whom received the crown of martyrdom while preaching, as also their missions to the West Indies, in the two succeeding ages, prove how interminable is this wondrous and sublime history. The blessed Odericus, a Franciscan out of Italy, travelled over nearly the whole world, winning souls to Christ. Persians, Medes, Armenians, Indians, Scythians, and Tartars, heard him announce the Gospel.†

John de Monte Corvino, a minor friar, sent to the East by Pope Nicholas IV. in the year 1289, writes as follows: "I, brother John, departed from Thaurisus, a city of Persia, in the year 1291, and entered India. At the church of St. Thomas the Apostle, I remained thirteen months, and baptized an hundred persons in various places. Brother Nicholas de Pistoria, of the order of the preachers, was my companion ; he died there, and was buried in that church. Thence proceeding alone, I came to Katag, the kingdom of the Tartars, and presented to the great Cham, letters from our lord the Pope, inviting him to embrace the true faith ; but he is too inveterate in idolatry ; though he conferred great benefits on the Christians, and I stayed with him during two years. Through the malicious misrepresentation of the Nestorian heretics, I was often dragged to judgment, in peril of death, till God revealed my innocence to the emperor. I remained solitary during eleven years, till brother John Arnold, of Cologne, came to me. I built one Church in the city of Cambaliech, which is the royal residence, and finished it in six years. I made a tower and placed in it three bells. There I baptized about six thousand persons. I also purchased successively, a hundred and fifty boys, sons of Pagans, of the age of seven to eleven, who, as yet, knew no law, and I baptized them, and taught them Latin and Greek ; and I wrote out thirty Psalters for them, with hymns, and two breviaries, with which eleven of these boys already know our office, and keep choir as in convents, whether I am present or not ; and many of them write out other books ; and the lord emperor delights much in their song. I toll the bells at the regular hours, and with this convent of children and babes, do I celebrate the divine office. I think if I had had two or three assistants, perhaps I should at length baptize the emperor. Therefore I entreat that some brethren may be sent out. Twelve years have now passed since I received any news from Rome, or from our order in the west. I want

\* Ger. Sacra, tom. II. 95.

† Wadding, Ann. Minor. tom. VII.

an Antiphonarium, and Lives of the Saints, a Gradual, and a Psalter, noted ; for I have only portable books, and if I had one copy, my boys could write out others. I am about building another church, and dispersing them through the country. I am now old and grey headed, yet rather through labors and tribulation than age, for I am in my fifty-eighth year. I have learned the language of the Tartars, and translated into that tongue the whole New Testament, and the Psalter ; and I have written them out in their most beautiful letters ; and I write, and read, and preach openly, in testimony of the law of Jesus Christ." This letter was written in the year 1305.\* Five years later, that emperor, his mother, and brother, were converted by the same friar John, who was now archbishop with three suffragans. The emperor desired to assume the name of John at his baptism ; and shortly after died and was buried in the convent.

It was in 1517, the year in which Martin Luther began to disseminate his doctrines, that Martin of Valentia, the apostle of America, began to preach in Spain ; who afterwards compensated in the remotest regions of India, the loss which the Christian Church suffered in the north. His letter in 1531, and that of Peter of Ghent, to his brother friars, in Belgium, in which he describes the manner of the Mexicans, and the preaching and establishments of the Franciscans, amongst them, are most valuable and interesting fragments of history.† This Martin died in the arms of a minor, uttering the words. "Brother, my desire has been frustrated ;" in which he alluded to his desire of martyrdom.

But it was not alone in converting infidel nations, that the zeal of the clergy, during the middle ages, was most remarkably exercised. The less eminent, though equally important office of instruction and admonition, in countries already subject to the Church, opened a field of action, on which we find them indefatigably employed. The spiritual interests of every people, were alike dear to the ambassadors of Christ. In the fifth century, France, directed by Pope Celestine I. sent her St. Germain of Auxerre, and St. Lupus, into England ; and these apostolic men preached not only in the churches, but also in the open air. Soon afterwards, the school of Iltut, their disciple, in Glamorganshire, gave Samson and St. Magloire to the see of Dol, in Brittany, and Maclou to that of St. Malos.

Bishops residing almost always in their cathedral city, preached often in the week, and sometimes every day. By authoritative promulgations, they procured obedience to the ecclesiastical discipline ; as when the canons of Ravenna denied entrance to the Church, during one month, to any layman who was heard uttering a blasphemous word, and the sacraments at death, if he had persisted.

Missionaries, who were generally monks, traversed the country, and preached in the churches, or in the open places, in the midst of the people. By the canons of the council of Arles, in the year 813, bishops are enjoined to be careful in in-

\* Wadding, *Annal. Minorum*, tom. VI

† Wadding, *Annal. Minorum*, tom. XVI.



structing the clergy and the people in the mysteries of the faith ; and the priests are required to preach not only in the towns, but in all the parishes. The council of Mayence, in 813, enjoins the clergy to teach the people the necessary prayers in the vulgar tongue, and the council of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 836, reminds all priests that they must teach the people how they ought to live and die. Thus we read of St. Richarius : "Such was his fervor to collect souls to Christ, that not confined to his monastery, he visited the churches, camps, and villages, and each of the houses of the faithful, to excite the hearts of his hearers, to the love of the celestial country."\*

The fame of this holy man's sanctity spreading far and wide, king Dagobert came with all his train, to visit him in order to commend himself to his prayers. The servant of God strengthened him with his blessing, and corrected him with the free voice of sacerdotal authority, warning him not to become proud with power, nor to trust in uncertain riches, not to be lifted up by the vain sound of applause, nor to take pleasure in perishable honors, but rather to fear the power of God, and to praise his immense glory, to esteem all human power and renown, as nothing which passes away like a shadow and vanishes, like the foam upon the water, before the least wind ; he reminded him that where more is given, more is required ; and he asked, how could he who would hardly be able to answer for himself, in the day of judgment, endure to give an account for so many thousands of people committed to him ? He said, that every one ought to fear more to be in pre-eminent station, than in one of subjection. This correction, the king, as he was wise, received benignly ; and taking pleasure in the free boldness of truth, he asked the priest of Christ, to come to his banquet : who being guided by the example of Christ, not disdaining the feast of seculars, came to the table of the king in order that he might find an occasion of preaching ; and during that whole day and night, he administered the words of God to the guests, amidst the joys of the feast. The king, from this hour, began to love him, and to show him great honor ; and he bestowed a territory upon him, which became the foundation of this monastery.†

Even on journeys we find provision made for hearing the preacher. King Robert, before setting out on his pilgrimage to Rome sent to inquire for men ; especially imbued with the duties of the Divine service ; and the venerable Angelrann, of the monastery of St. Richarius, is proclaimed by all to be most expert ; so that the king took him along with him. During the journey, the hidden riches of this man were made to appear ; for he preached and instilled the word into the hearts of his companions. The king admired his conversation, was delighted with the spotless chastity of his life, was amazed at the eloquence of his tongue, and filled with reverence for the purity of his soul. It is said that throughout

\* Chronic. Centulensis sive Richarii apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. IV.

† Chronic. Centulensis sive Richarii Lib. I cap. 18.

the whole way in which he militated in the divine service, for God and the king, he never wanted to be refreshed by the consolation of books; "which whether or not it could be," says this ancient writer, "let the learned judge, but the studious examine."\*

In their zeal to announce to the people what they had received, we find the clergy dauntless, under the most discouraging circumstances, as if ever mindful of the injunction which God gave through his prophet; "Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of scorpions; but speak to them, for perchance they will hear."†

One need only read the letter of Pope Alexander III. to the archbishop of Upsal, and his suffragans, to form some idea of the evils, in barbarous lands, which were combatted by the holy see.

Truly admirable does their zeal appear in this respect, when contrasted with the spirit of all former teachers, who had appeared amongst mankind. Not even Pythagoras would impart his wisdom to every one. Lysis rebuked Hipparchus for speaking of it to the vulgar, and said, that it was unjust and impious to reveal to common men, the things which were acquired with such pains and labor. There was the distinction of those within or without the veil; for such was the pride of these teachers, that they made it a mark of great honor, and proficiency, to be admitted within the veil to behold them; and Pythagoras used to sit with a curtain between him and his hearers, till he had proved them, and judged them worthy to see his face.‡ How would such teachers have been lost in amaze, on witnessing the humility and condescension of the Catholic philosophers, in communicating their mysteries to the human race! If they could have heard a Bernardine of Sienna, teaching the duties of his order, and saying, "*Doceant aperte qui susceperunt occulte: doceant humane qui susceperunt divine: doceant libenter qui susceperunt silenter: doceant gaudenter qui acceperunt gratanter?*"§

St. Jerome Æmilian, that noble Venetian, the founder of the orphan schools, is recorded to have literally made himself all things to all men, to save them. Mixed in the crowd of rustic laborers, assisting them to reap the corn, and to gather in the harvest, he used to explain to them the mysteries of the faith; binding up the wounds of poor little boys, he used to administer spiritual remedies, while he seemed intent only on taking care of their bodies.

The blessed friar, Lewis of Barga, in the fifteenth century, used to walk through the fields, and hold the plough for the rustics, that he might discourse to them on God, and persuade them to repair to confession.||

I think no one will question any longer the warmth of zeal which was evinced by the clergy of the middle ages, in seeking to convert men; but it will be asked, to what did they really convert them? For the statements of modern writers, respecting the ecclesiastical influence, however unjust and monstrous, render

\* Lib. IV. cap. 2.

† Ezek. ii.

‡ Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita. cap. 17.

§ S. Ber. Senens. tom. III. § IV.

|| Ann. Min. tom. XIV.

some observations, in reply to this question, indispensable. Lorenzo Pignotti, in his history of Tuscany, which I profess not to understand, seems inclined to maintain, that the clergy advocated every abuse, and inculcated every superstition. The assertions, indeed, of a writer, to whom Gibbon and Robertson are always original sources of infallible purity, in whose judgment Locke is the greatest of philosophers, and language the noblest of human inventions, ought not to be rashly interpreted, lest one should treat him with injustice; but there is a multitude of writers at present who, undoubtedly, entertain such views. Four years have not passed since a splendid edition appeared at Edinburgh, of a work which contained the following sentence, among many others similar. "The clergy in the middle ages, were lords of the people's consciences; and in this capacity employed their influence nearly always to the detriment of the clear and direct authority of honest virtue." You smile, reader, and accuse me of disrespect, for presenting you with such passages; but remember, these are taken from popular works, and, perhaps, in some countries, those who have converted literature into a trade, have made the discovery that no works can be popular, which are not enriched with such passages. They occur, too, in works of a far higher order. "The monastic apostles of Livonia," says Voigt, "brought that heathen people the Christianity of the middle ages; the religion of monks into which they were to be initiated by a little sprinkling of water. No wonder, therefore, that those heathens should suppose, as they said, that by bathing in a river, they could wash out that poor faith, and obliterate it." Now truly, reader, my burden is great, that Voigt's name is laid upon me, whom, I must confess, of all modern historians of his sect, seems worthy of most admiration, since of all such he is the most Catholic; yet if he will defile the fountains, out of which his flowing streams have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reason he did it. To neglect at first more positive testimony, how, on such a supposition, can he explain the prodigious change in the material order of society, which followed the preaching of the men of God, who evangelized the nations of Germany? Has he forgotten those great voices which were heard over the tops of the mountains, in the silence of the night, as if of mourners calling to each other, and lamenting the broken idols which amidst the acclamations of the converted multitude, had been thrown in the lake of Constance, after the sermon of St. Gall?"\*

Walafrid Strabo says, "that St. Gall remained some time with Theodebert, king of Austrasia, opening the sacred Scriptures to him, and insinuating truth."† These monastic apostles of Livonia brought with them, as an old writer says, the grace of conversation, the temperance of sobriety, the modesty of patience, the virtue of abstinence, the constancy of preaching, the sweetness of affability,‡ and, undoubtedly, the initiatory sacrament of baptism; that this was part of the Chris-

\* Walafrid Strab. de Vit. S. Gall. cap. 6.

† Id. cap. 3.

‡ Arnold. Lubec. I. c.



tianity of the middle ages, one is most ready to admit; but can this be adduced in evidence, to prove that the clergy of that epoch, neglected to insist upon the exercise of justice, and the observance of the laws of the Gospel? The reader who has condescended to follow me through the former volumes of this work, must feel already convinced how utterly unfounded are all such representations; but as the investigation cannot fail to bring to light fresh beauties, which lie too often buried or forgotten in the pages of our ancient books, I fearlessly invite him to accompany me on his quest, with a view to ascertain not what was the object of preachers, which would imply in ourselves a most unjustifiable and even ridiculous doubt; but what were the peculiar characteristics belonging to the instruction of the clergy during the middle ages.

Pope St. Gregory says, "that in order to teach his people, the Lord at no time ceased to send laborers into his vine-yard; for formerly, by the fathers, afterwards by doctors of the law, and prophets, and lastly, by the apostles, he labored as if with husbandmen, to till and cultivate it."\* If you ask, with what effect? the question becomes wholly different. Our Lord, in three years, made but few disciples; the first missionaries are said to have only converted seven persons in all Spain. St. Bernard, accordingly, says to Pope Eugene: "You are not obliged to cure, but to spare nothing in order to cure." "I have labored more than them all," said St. Paul; he did not say, "I have gained more fruit. Do thou thy duty without anxiety, and without disturbance, and God will do what is right."

It was a celebrated question with the ancient philosophers, whether virtue could be communicated by instruction. Socrates denied that it could be taught; being not the gift of nature, but the effect of a certain inspiration from heaven.† Theages, Protagoras, Crito, and Simo, wrote books in the same sense;‡ which opinion Cicero follows.§ The Stoics, on the contrary, held with Chrysippus, Cleanthes, and Possidonius, that virtue might be imparted by teaching. The verses of Hesiod were famous; "He is best of all who of himself understands all things; and he is good who consents to him who speaks well; but he who neither of himself knows what is right, nor consents to hear another who announces it, is, indeed, an useless man."|| Under the latter supposition, however, the practical results were not so easily obtained. "The Athenians," as Socrates observes, "were not worse when Pericles first began to harangue them, than they were afterwards, when he pronounced before them his last oration."¶ It is true, the question could hardly be tried fairly, when the teachers of justice were themselves among the unjust. The honest fisherman in Plautus describes most of them in those times, when replying to the fine discourse of Dæmones:

"Spectavi ego pridem comicos ad istum modum  
Sapienter dicta dicere, atque iis plaudier.

\*Hom. XIX.

† Laert. II. 121.

‡ Æschinis Socratici Dialog 1. de virtute. Plato Meno Euthydemus.

§ De Nat. Deorum, II. 66.

|| Op. et Dies.

¶ Plato Georgias.

Cum illos sapientis mores monstrabant populo ;  
Sed cum inde suam quisque ibant divorsi domum,  
Nullus erat illo pacto, ut illi jussuerant.”\*

We have already seen what was the justice of the clergy as far as regards themselves. Robertson prefaces his praise of the Catholic missionaries in America, by saying that they were weak and ignorant, but pious men ; on which Manzoni remarks, “ What is this religion in which weak men when they are pious resist force in favor of their fellow men, and in which the ignorant are able to refute the sophisms which the passions oppose to justice ? What is this religion, one may indeed demand, which enables its weak ministers to rise above all the intellectual summits of their age, and to transmit to all posterity monuments of their eminent and heroic justice ? ”

Guizot, after describing the duties and the oaths prescribed to knighthood, as given by St. Palaye and La Colombière remarks, “ Certainly in this series of oaths, and in the obligations imposed by chivalry, there is a moral development quite foreign from the lay society of this epoch. Moral notions so elevated, often so delicate, so scrupulous, above all so humane, and always stamped with the religious character, emanated evidently from the clergy. The clergy alone in these times thought of the duties and relations of men ; their influence was constantly employed in directing the ideas and customs of chivalry to the accomplishment of these duties, and to the amelioration of these relations. Chivalry was not instituted, as I have shown, with this design, for the protection of the weak, the re-establishment of justice, and the reformation of manners : it arose simply without design, as a natural consequence of the Germanic traditions and feudal relations ; but the clergy soon took possession of it, and made it an instrument to establish peace in society, and a more enlarged and rigorous morality in private conduct or, in short, to further the general work which they pursued. The canons of the councils, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, will show the clergy thus employed in making chivalry subservient to the same result.”†

But now, leaving these modern writers to adjust their differences of opinion, let us proceed to the original sources of information, and observe what is the evidence of history respecting the preaching of the clergy during the middle ages ; for it is clear that their instructions are as much matter of history as the orations of Pericles or the apology of Plato.

It is a singular circumstance that the discourses from which Maclean and Robertson, and after them a whole host of historic writers, conclude that the clergy during the middle ages, taught men to suppose that the Christian religion imposed no other duty but that of paying tithes, should be precisely those of an eminent servant of God, which have been transmitted to us in great detail by another saint, who wrote the history of his life, a considerable part of which is

\* Rudens, IV. 7.

† Cours d'Hist. Moderne, tom. IV. 6.

occupied with recording how he used to preach to the people; a work which is assuredly one of the most interesting literary monuments of that period which the Church possesses.

With the early life of St. Eloy, we were made acquainted in a former book. It was then understood at parting, that we should again meet with him, and in the cloisters of Noyon. The moment is arrived to have those hopes verified. The second part of that history presents to us the ecclesiastical life of Eligius, and relates how at a council held to take measures against heresy and to correct the customs of ordinations, Eligius was elected bishop of the church of Noyon, while at the same time Ouen was chosen to preside over that of Rouen. The holy man insisted upon first discharging the clerical functions of a lower rank for a time. At length both were consecrated on the same day, in the church of Rouen. His life was now distinguished by the same humility and good works. His pastoral efforts were successful in reclaiming many barbarous people from idolatry, which still had root among savage parts bordering on the sea. He held a middle place between the rich and the poor, so that the poor looked up to him as to a father, and the rich as to a superior, for he did not pay regard to the power of the person, but rather to the excellence of manners; and he honored each man in proportion to the sanctity of his life. He thought it a personal loss if any poor person were relieved by any one else but himself, for he believed that he relieved Christ in the poor. Every day he taught the people committed to his charge, assembling them in the church, and speaking with the boldness of a prophet.

"I beseech you, dearest brethren," he used to say, "and admonish you with great humility, that you would hear me with attention, while I remind you of what is necessary for your salvation. Consider that I am bound to excite you without ceasing to remember the tremendous judgment of God and to desire the heavenly recompense, in order that with you I may deserve to rejoice in the perpetual peace of angels. Remember what a covenant you have made in baptism, and what are the articles of your faith, that your being called Christians, may not serve to your condemnation but to your remedy, for to that end you are made Christians, that you may always do the works of Christ, that is to say, that you should love chastity, fly from luxury and drunkenness, that you should hold to humility and detest pride, because our Lord Christ showed humility by example and taught it by his words, desiring you to learn of him who was meek and humble of heart, and saying that you would find rest unto your souls. Beware of envying: have charity to each other, and always think of the future life and of eternal happiness, and labor more for your soul than for your body, because the flesh will be but for a short time in the world, whereas the soul will either reign for ever in heaven, or else will burn eternally in hell. It is not, therefore, enough, dearest brethren, that you bear the Christian name, if you do not perform Christian works; for to him only is it of advantage to be called a Christian who always retains in his mind the precepts of Christ and perfects them in his work; who does not steal, does not bear



false witness, does not commit adultery, hates no man, but loves all men, and prays for his enemies and makes peace. He is a good Christian who places all his hope in Christ alone ; who receives strangers joyfully as Christ himself, because he says, 'I was a stranger, and you took me in ;' who washes their feet, and loves them as his dearest relations ; who gives alms according to his ability, who comes frequently to the church, and offers his oblations at the altar of God ; who has no false weights, who lends not his money on usury, who lives chastely, and who teaches his children and neighbors to live chastely in the fear of God, who reverences the holy solemnities of the Church, that with a secure conscience he may approach to the altar of the Lord. Lo, brethren, this it is to be a good Christian.

"While you have time, therefore, bear in mind and fulfil the precepts of Christ, give alms, have peace and charity, prevent discord, fly falsehood, do not steal, offer oblations and tenths to the churches, and exhibit lights at the holy places, and see that your children live always in the fear of God ; hallow the Sunday, abstaining from all servile work through reverence for the resurrection of Christ, and celebrate the solemnities of the saints with pious affection, and, above all things, have charity ; be hospitable, be humble, casting all your care upon God, for he careth for you, visit the sick and the prisoners, receive strangers, feed the hungry, clothe the naked. Despise fortunetellers and magicians, and beware above all things how you observe the sacrilegious customs of the Pagans, how you consult or interrogate for any cause the diviners or casters of nativities, because he who does this evil, immediately loses the sacrament of baptism. In like manner, attend not to omens, to sneezing, or to birds, or to what you meet when you first go out on your journey, but whether on a journey, or whatever you do, sign yourself in the name of Christ, and say the Creed and Paternoster with faith and devotion, and then no enemy can hurt you. Let no Christian observe what day he goes out or returns home, because God has made all days ; let no one attend to the day or to the moon for beginning any work ; let no one practise the pagan buffooneries at the calends in January, or believe in any charms, for they are diabolical works ; let no one on the festival of St. John, or of any of the saints, observe the solstices, or dances, or diabolical songs, or invoke Neptune, Diana, or Minerva ; let no one pass Thursday in idleness, or any day in May, or any day excepting Sundays and the festivals of the saints ; let no Christian resort to the temples, or to rocks, or fountains, or trees, or to holes ; let no one presume to hang round the neck of a man or animal any ligament, although it should be done by a clerk, and although it be said that it is a holy thing and contains divine readings, for there is not in it the remedy of Christ but the poison of the devil. Let no woman call upon Minerva in any work of weaving or dying, but in every work desire the grace of Christ, and trust in the virtue of his name. Let no one presume to cry out if the moon be eclipsed, or fear to begin any work at the new moon, for God made the moon to dispel the darkness of the night, not to stop the works of

men or to make them mad, as some fools think, who being invaded by demons, ascribe what they suffer to the moon ; but the sun and moon are the creatures of God, and serve to the necessities of men by his order.

“ And let the sick have no recourse to magicians, but let them trust in the sole mercy of God, and let them receive the eucharist of the body and blood of Christ with faith and devotion, and let them seek the blessed oil from the Church, that their bodies may be anointed in the name of Christ, and that, according to the apostle, the prayer of faith may save them, and the Lord will raise them up, and will restore the health not only of their bodies but of their souls. Above all things, whether at home or on a journey, take heed that no shameful or luxurious words proceed from your mouths, and that you sing no songs of the Gentiles, and reject with all horror those inventions of the enemy, and exhibit veneration to no creature but only to God and to his saints. Make no similitude of feet which are placed at the meeting of two ways, but if you find them burn them with fire, and adore not the heavens, or the stars, or the earth, or any other creature, because God hath made and disposed them all. High, indeed, are the heavens, vast the earth, immense the sea, beautiful the stars, but more immense and more beautiful is He who created them ; and if those things that we see are so incomprehensible, that is, the various fruits of the earth, the beauty of flowers, the diversity of fruits, the races of animals, the prudence of the bees, the winds and the dew, and the lightning, and the succession of the seasons, all which things no human mind can fully comprehend ; if these things are such which we behold, what must be those heavenly things which have not yet been seen ? or what their Maker whose hand created them, or by whose will they are all governed ? Brethren, Him you must fear above all things, adore him, love him, hold to his mercy, and never despair of his goodness. Imitate the good and correct the wicked, and let him that hath sinned do penance from all his heart ; for if he should die without penance, he will not go to redemption but to hell for ever. Let no one get drunk, or persuade another to drink more than is convenient. Every Sunday come together to the church, and pray for the peace of the church and for your own forgiveness. Judges, judge justly ; receive not gifts, nor attend to persons. You who govern, and you who are governed, be grounded equally in the fear of God. Have Christ always in your mind, and his sign upon your forehead. You have many adversaries who hasten to prevent your course, and therefore, in every place and every hour, arm yourselves with the sign of the cross, for this alone is what they fear. Moreover the sign of Christ is a great thing, and the cross of Christ ; but it is only of advantage to those who keep the commands of Christ. Therefore, see that you keep them with all your strength, and whether you sit or walk, or eat, or ascend your bed, or rise from it, let the sign of Christ guard your forehead, and the memory of God always protect you. And when you shall fulfil all these things with the divine aid, know ye that the devil will be grieved, and perhaps will send some evil or infirmity to you, but do

not despair, for God permits this to prove you, and therefore bless him for ever ; and if once or twice you resist manfully, he will never permit the devil again to tempt you. And wonder not if even these diviners should foretell the truth, for he can easily foresee the future, and the divine scripture says, ‘*Etiam si vera dixerint vobis, nolite credere eis ;*’\* but nothing can hurt you beyond what God permits, and he permits only that he may either prove the just or correct the sinner. As for the poor, be bountiful in your alms to them ; give money and purchase everlasting life. He that hath gold let him give gold, he that hath silver, silver ; but he that hath no money, with a good mind let him give a mouthful to the poor, for no poor man can dispense himself from giving alms, since a cup of cold water is to have its reward. God might make all men rich, but he wishes that there should be poor, that the rich might redeem their sins. Redeem yourselves while you live, because after death no one can redeem you. Let every one give the tenth of his substance to the poor or to the churches, for God is worthy to receive this at our hands. If any poor should die of hunger and you have not given, you will be their murderers. And do not choose to whom you will show mercy, lest perchance you should pass over him who deserves to receive it, because you know not in whom Christ may come to you. Do this that it may be well with you, and that God may bless you. Remember these things always ; tell them to you children and to your neighbors, when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way. Consider what the blessed John the apostle says, ‘*Novissima hora est.*’

“Therefore love not the world, because it will soon pass and its concupiscence with it ; but do the will of God that you may remain for ever, that you may have confidence when he shall appear, and that you may not be confounded at his advent. Consider, I entreat you, therefore, what a destructive thing it is to do the works of the devil and to be partakers of his punishment. If any man sin let him not rest in deadly security ; let him do penance. Let him that was proud be humble, that was an adulterer be chaste, that was a thief be now a dispenser of his own goods to the churches and to the poor ; he that was envious, let him be benign, he that was drunken let him be sober ; he that was choleric, let him be patient ; he that hath injured another, let him ask pardon ; and he that hath been injured, let him pardon, for let no one deceive you ; for if he should hold one man in this world in enmity, whatever good works he may offer to God, he loses them all, for the apostle does not lie, terribly exclaiming, ‘He that hateth his brother is a murderer and a liar, and walketh in darkness ;’ and by brother every man is meant for we are all brethren in Christ. So then, brethren, run while you have light, before the darkness shall come upon you ; while you labor for the flesh, labor also for the spirit. When you fast, give what you would have eaten to the poor, and remember that what your body is when it goes without

\* Deut. xiii.



food for a long time, that your soul is when deprived for any considerable time of hearing the word of God. Let each man love his wife without dissimulation, but as for concubines, either before or after marriage, whoever is thus guilty, deserves to be cut off from the society of Christians, and without penance will burn without remedy in eternal flames ; for what is unlawful for women, is equally so for men. Therefore, Christian soul, take heed. Watch, pray, and beware of these crimes. Open your hand to the poor, that Christ may open his door to you, and that you may enter into the joys of paradise. Amend your lives, and then you will never despair of pardon, whatever sins you may have committed. Despair is greater than all your sins, therefore never despair of God's mercy, neither after the hundredth time of sinning, nor after the thousandth, for there is no sin so grievous but there is pardon for it by penance. Despise no one,—no poor man, no slave,—because perhaps he is better than you before God, and because we are all one in Christ Jesus.

“The Lord not only admonishes us, but with ineffable goodness entreats us to be converted to him. Let us hear him now, when he asks us, lest otherwise he should not hear us when we shall come to judgment. Be separated then from the devil, and joined to God who hath redeemed you, and place all your hope in the mercy of Christ, and guard your souls, not only from a shameful act, but also from every base thought ; because the Lord God is a just judge, and will judge the thoughts of the heart. Abstain altogether from swearing, and beware that you give not scandal to any man. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ. Watch carefully, because the nearer that the world shall approach to its end, the more cruelly will the devil rage against Christians ; knowing that he is soon to be condemned, and that he may multiply his companions. Take heed, therefore, and know that each of you has an angel of God who watches over you continually, and if you do well you rejoice him, and if evil you drive him from you, and make place for a malignant demon. Look well, therefore, into yourselves, and see whether you have minds corresponding with angelic purity ; and if you see that you are good, never presume upon your merits with a proud mind, but rather so much the more take heed with humility. And have a horror of all excess in eating and drinking, which leads to other sins : and this I say, not that I should ascribe evil to the creature of God, but that I should render you more sober and cautious. Nay, I admonish you, that you never call any creature of God evil, for whatever seems evil to us, is evil not from its own nature but from our sins. Beware of the broad way which leadeth to destruction ; follow the narrow by which eternal happiness is found. When you have a feast call the poor and the stranger, for it is not just that, in a Christian people, some should be inflated while others are in danger of perishing through hunger. Wherefore should not the poor man partake of your meat, who is to enjoy along with you the society of angels ? Wherefore should he not receive one tunic, who is alike to receive the stole of immortality ? So live, then, that when you depart hence,

and your flesh shall be devoured by worms in the tomb, your soul, adorned with good works, may rejoice with the saints in heaven. Behold, a little while and the world shall cease, and all visible things shall pass away like a cloud, or like the evening shadow. Therefore, love not the world, which thus declines to its end, especially since the apostle declares that its friendship is enmity with God. Love, therefore, eternal life, and hasten there, where you will live for ever, and never fear to die. If you so love this miserable and flowing life, where you live with such labor, and where by running, and searching, and sighing, you can scarcely satisfy the necessities of the body, how much more ought you to love the eternal life, where you will have no labor to endure, where you will enjoy the utmost security, and happiness, and freedom, and where men will be like the angels, not in substance but in beatitude; and where the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father? What do you think will be the splendor of souls when the light of bodies will have the brightness of the sun? There will be no sorrow, no fear, no death, no malice, no want, no terror, of barbarians or of torture, no hunger, no thirst, no cold, no heat, no temptation of the enemy, no wish to sin, no possibility of falling; but men and angels will enjoy a perpetual spring in felicity and peace, and amidst the splendors of an endless solemnity. Therefore, brethren, let us not serve sin and lose this happiness which is prepared in heaven, but let us regard ourselves as strangers upon earth, that we may hasten with more speed there; for all things that are seen will quickly pass away, quickly like a shadow.

“ See, then, dearly beloved, I have set this before you with simplicity, that each of you may know what is to become of him. No one can now plead ignorance, since you have heard of life and death, the punishment of the wicked, and the glory of the just. It remains for you to choose which you will have. Defer not, then, your conversion. Let him that is bound with the chain of his sins rise up now quickly, and awake from the sleep of death. Let him haste to confession and do penance, nor let him blush, for it is better to have shame here for a little time, than to endure the punishment for so many millions of ages. If he be penitent from his heart, the Redeemer will soon raise him up, for he raised up Lazarus after he had been four days dead and was now stinking; for he willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live. And besides, see now what evils daily press upon us, indicating that the end of the world is at hand. Nothing remains, then, but alone the day of God’s judgment, and the coming of the terrible antichrist. Behold war upon war, tribulation upon tribulation, famine upon famine, pestilence upon pestilence, and nation rising up against nation. Why have we breasts of stone and iron, that we should not think for the remedy of our souls among so many evils! Beloved, I admonish you, as the world seems coming to an end, so let human malice. We cannot have both Christ and the world for our portion. And, above all, let us love God, for it is impious not to love him who descended from the seat of paternal majesty to save undeserving men. Have charity, which is the bond of unity; have charity,

and you will have all virtues. As far as in us lies, let us keep all the precepts of God ; and let us hasten where death will not be feared, and where all the saints are waiting and desiring to receive and behold us ; where Christ our celestial King and the angels, the heavenly citizens are expecting us, with outstretched arms. O, then, I say, let us hasten where we shall live for ever and be joined to the angelic host, and delivered from all contagion of sin, our Lord Jesus Christ presiding with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.”\*

With such familiar instructions he daily taught the people : he did not prefer a rich man to a poor man, nor a prince or noble to a mean person, but on the contrary he appeared more austere to the former, while he evinced great modesty to the others : his servants, too, were treated by him with the utmost benignity, and not after the manner of master and servant ; he was strong to execute all tolerance, and mild to bear injuries. Thus did he exercise himself in every labor, and at length when he was old and past his seventieth year, perceiving the dissolution of his body to be near at hand, one day walking with his disciples in the city of Noyon, and casting his eyes by chance, he saw that part of the wall of the front of the Basilica of St. Medard was crumbling to decay, and immediately ordered workmen to be employed in strengthening it with ligaments ; and his disciples saying it would be better to wait until it might be more solidly repaired, he replied, “Let it be done now while I remain, lest otherwise it be never done.” At this word they were troubled, and said, “May it not happen to your servants to behold what you say ; but may the Lord permit you to remain long with us to be the ornament of the church and the guardian of the poor ;” but he, looking up to heaven and sighing, said, “Not your will but God’s will be done in me. Be not cast down, my sons, but rather rejoice and congratulate me, because long ago I desired this time to arrive.”

Thus ended their conversation for that day. Shortly after he was seized with a fever, and then he knew that he was to die, and so he assembled all his servants and ministers, and exhorted them as usual to follow peace and to keep the bond of unity. Still he continued to perform all his usual exercises, and he spent his nights in prayer and watching. On the day preceding the calends of December, he again assembled all his servants and disciples, and thus spoke to them :— “Dearly beloved, hear my last sentences. If you have ever loved me strive to fulfil the divine law ; always breathe Jesus, and fix his precepts in your minds. If you ever loved me, love the name of Christ as I have done ; fear always the tremendous judgment of God, for I, according to the language of the Scriptures, am going the way of all the earth ; and now I desire to be dissolved, and if it shall please the Lord, in peace. Behold this day I commend to your hands the salvation

\* This was the sermon from which a garbled extract was adduced in evidence, by modern English historians, to prove that in the middle ages the clergy taught that nothing was required to make a good Christian but the punctual payment of tithes.



of your souls, and keep me in memory, for Eligius departs and will be no longer with you in this world." All that stood round him wept and lamented, which the pious pastor perceiving, suffered his tears to flow, rejoicing for himself, but having compassion on those that he was to leave. At length resuming his discourse, he continued, "Do not lament, and do not distress me with your weeping, for if you were truly wise you would rejoice, and not grieve; for though absent in body I shall be present in spirit: and though it should be otherwise, yet God is always present with you, and to him I commend you." It was now the close of the day, and he fell upon his knees on the ground, and besought God that he would provide a pastor for his people who should rule them with modesty, for to the last his only care was for others; and now, as the cold of death spread over him, he called all his disciples and companions, and embraced them, and wished them farewell, saying "I cannot speak to you any longer, and you will see my face no more. Therefore farewell in peace—and suffer me now to rest, and permit my material part to return to its parent earth."

Then after a pause, with suppliant eyes raised to heaven, he prayed in silence, and at length burst out, saying, "Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace:" remember that thou didst form me from the clay—and enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified; and then after a little, he added, "O Christ, Redeemer of the world, who alone art without sin, remember me—and leading me from the body of this death, save me in thy heavenly kingdom: thou wert always my protector—'In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.' I know that I do not deserve to behold thy face; yet thou knowest that always my hope was in thy mercy, my faith in thy goodness, and now with the confession of thy name, O Christ, I breathe my last sigh. Receive me then according to thy great mercy; open to me the gates of life, and let not the prince of darkness meet me, nor the powers of the air disturb me, but stretch forth thy hand and lead me into the place of refreshment which thou hast prepared for thy servants." With these words his spirit departed at the first hour of the night; his body placed upon a bier was borne into the church, and there the clergy in turn sung the hymns, while the people lamented, and spent the night in watching. Early the next morning the queen Bathilde, with her daughters, and many princes, came to the town, and bitterly lamented that they had not arrived in time to find the holy man alive. Then after a general fast of three days the funeral was marshalled, and though it was the winter season, no persuasions could detain the devout queen from following the bier on foot with all her family; and so amidst the tears and groans of the poor and all the people, and of the monks who came from all parts, the holy bishop was carried to his grave.\* The discourse of Eligius, and the conclusion of his life, hath detained us, reader: but the influence which yet lives in these

\* Vita S. Eligii, B. Audœni Episcop. Auct. apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. V.

words of heaven, with Apostolic radiance compassed, will compensate the brief delay. It is not for my lips to comment such a teacher. With fear and reverence mute let us pass on.

Profane historians have occasion repeatedly to mention the preachers of the middle ages, and to record instances of the great effects resulting from their zeal. It is related of S. Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury, that in preaching he seemed to possess the tongue of an angel, so that no one by description could give an idea of the grace and sweetness of his discourse. A multitude of clerks and laics after hearing him commenced a new life, and studied to embrace a holy conversation, and to adhere wholly and for ever to God. A noble woman Ela, countess of Salisbury, persuaded her husband William Longsword to hear him. The count had lived a worldly life, without any thought for a long time of confession, and of receiving the body of Christ according to the manner of the universal church. The words and the very countenance of Edmund had such an impression upon him, that he changed his life and became totally a new man: he confessed his sins to a hermit to whom Edmund referred him, and with due reverence received the holy eucharist. Edmund in preaching used to hold a crucifix in his hand, beholding which he would weep and smile—weep to think, as he said, that there were many hearers and so few doers of the word, while they had the passion of Christ before their eyes, and the example of the saints—and smile when he regarded the cross with pious eyes, and thought upon the benefits which it had conferred upon the whole world.”\*

Robert canon of St. Marien d'Auxerre and Jacques de Vitry, describe a contemporary priest, Foulques, who went about as a missionary, preaching penance and conversion to God, through France, Flanders, and Burgundy, and working great reformation among usurers and persons of profligate character, being in age a young man, but in science and in manners most eminent. All the people used to call him “the holy man.” Pierre Chantre in the year 1180, wishing to give Foulques, who had been his disciple, an opportunity of exerting his talents, caused him to preach in his presence, and before many learned men in the church of St. Severin at Paris. Jacques de Vitry says, “that God gave such a blessing to his sermons, although they were in a very simple style, that even all the learned philosophers of Paris, used to excite each other to come and hear the priest Foulques, who preached, said they, like a second St. Paul. They used even to bring tablets with them in order to write down his words.”† Foulques died young in the year 1201, being curate of Neuilly sur Marne.‡ Many eminent preachers followed in his steps, among whom were Peter Chantre, Robert de Cuthon, Walter of London, Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, John de Nivelle, and Eutache, abbot of Flay.

\* Vita S. Edmundi, apud Martene Thesaur. Anecd. tom. III.

† Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Paris tom. II. ‡ Lebeuf. Hist. du Diocese de Paris, tom. I. c. 4.

The journal of the reign of Charles VII. records that in the year 1429, at Boulogne, near Paris, brother Richard, a Franciscan, being lately returned from Jerusalem, made so affecting a sermon, that on the return of the people to Paris there were seen more than an hundred fires, in which men burned tables, cards, and billiards, while women burned extravagant pompous ornaments, with which they used to adorn their heads.\* This holy friar used to preach also in the cemetery of the holy Innocents, to the infinite admiration of the people. His sermons used generally to last six hours.† In general, however, the sermons of the middle ages were not prolix. "A tedious sermon," says Guibert de Nogent, "only causes anger. What was good in it is forgotten, and men go away feeling only aversion."‡ St. Francis expressly directed his friars in preaching to use brevity of discourse, because a short word will the Lord make upon the earth. Whatever faults may have been committed by the Florentines at the time of the preaching of Friar Jerome, however justly Petrus Delphinus may have accused him of imprudence,§ still a spirit of great piety seems to have characterized the measure which Pignotti stigmatizes as a sacred farce. At the instigation of the friars, during the carnival a numerous flock of children, appointing deputies for every quarter, went in humility and devotion to all the houses, asking for the anatheme, or all that was profane, such as obscene pictures and books, which were freely granted to them, whilst the devout female sex, yielding humbly to these innocent preachers, suffered themselves to be despoiled of the dearest ornaments of personal decoration, and of every thing that had been invented to give a false appearance to beauty. On the last day of the carnival, after having heard mass, clothed in white, carrying on their heads garlands of olive, and red crosses in their hands, they proceeded, singing psalms, to the Piazza del Signori, where a pyramidal scaffold had been erected, upon which these instruments of pleasure and profane luxury were deposited. The children mounted the rostrum, and after having sung spiritual hymns, the four deputies came down with lighted torches, and set fire to the pile, which was consumed amidst the voices of joy and the sound of trumpets. It was this fire which make fools the rich who now collect the first editions of Boccacio.

While Savonarola confined his preaching to the reformation of manners, he did but adopt the style of the middle ages, which he defended with great power against the sophists, who despised it. "They love not the sacred Scriptures," he exclaims, "they understand them not, they taste them not. Our soul, we hear them say, is weary of this light bread—let us have the eloquence of Cicero, the verses of poets, the subtle sentences of Aristotle. Preach to us subtle things."|| Certainly one may derive a great insight into the character of such men as John Picus of Mirandola, Hermolaus Barbarus, Marcilius Ficinus, Lorenzo de Medici, and Angelo Politian, from the one fact that Savonarola, while he merely an-

\* Ibid. tom. III. 23.

† Pasquier, *Recherches de la France*, Lib. VI. 39.

‡ Lib. quo ordine sermo fieri debeat.

§ Annal. Camaldul. Lib. LXVIII.

|| De Simplicitate Vitæ Christianæ, Lib. I.



nounced the word of God with boldness, was their favorite companion, and the preacher whom they heard with the greatest respect and admiration. They beheld not in him one who might forget the precept of Christ, and make no distinction between the chair and him who sat thereon : and after all, who that has ever heard the issue should presume to condemn a man dear to Philip Neri and Catherine Ricci whom holy church hath canonized, to whom the offering of prayer as to a saint seems to have been sanctioned by the thirteenth Benedict, and whose memory Paul the fourth hath solemnly absolved ? Politically their antagonist, the Medicæan princes revered in him the minister of the Most High, and John Francis of Mirandola observes, that not even the enemies of that friar ever dared to question the integrity and sanctity of his life and manners.\* Even when expressions seem to indicate that somewhat of human eloquence was sought for in the pulpit, the description of preachers at that time would lead one to form a very high idea of their merit. Angelo Politian in a letter to Tristan Chalcos, confesses that when he first went to hear Marianus Genazaansis preach, he went as if to explore and with little respect, but when he saw the habit of the man, and state, and as it were the nature in his eyes, and the countenance no way vulgar, he began to expect what was in fact the result. "Lo then he begins to speak," saith he, "I stretch out my ears, I hear a sonorous voice, choice words, grand sentences : I am already caught—he proceeds—he is stopped by nothing, there is nothing that wants a termination : he argues, I am ensnared ; he adds little narrations, I am led away ; he modulates a verse, I am captive ; he even jests, I laugh ; he presses, he urges, I give him my hands ; he tries the milder affections, immediately the tears steal down ; he cries out in anger, I am terrified, and I repent having come. I confess for my part he seems in the pulpit to surpass himself, and frequently even the measure of man. While I contemplate, too, all this in detail, I fancy that after a while, when the novelty is over, he will less affect me ; but the contrary is the fact, for the next day I heard him as if he were a new man, only better than he appeared the day before, when he seemed to have attained perfection. Nor would you despise that little body, so unconquerable and indefatigable, which seems to repair its strength by fresh labor. Moreover, when I went into the country, I lived familiarly with him in the same house, and I never saw any one more placid and more cautious ; his severity would not intimidate, yet his facility would not corrupt you. Only in the pulpit he shows his censor ; when he descends he is all civility, so that when he is with Picus of Mirandola, and me, we find no remedy so effectual as his conversation against the sadness of literary labor. Lorenzo de Medici himself, an acute observer of dispositions, prefers a little walk with him to all the recreations of city life. Only examine the man near, and you will praise the judgment of your Politian. You will find a man who is never troublesome, and who is incapable of giving offence."†

\* J. F. Pic. de Studio Divin. et Hum. Sciëntiæ, I. 27. † Angelo Politian, Epist. Lib. IV.

William of Malmesbury relates that St. Wolstan, when a monk at Worcester, used to give himself up wholly to spiritual discipline, and that although rude as to secular science, he was, nevertheless, considered one of the most eloquent preachers in the English tongue ; of which there was a remarkable proof given by the citizens of Bristol : for when neither the royal nor the pontifical power could deter them from the nefarious trade of native slaves, this holy preacher by constant sermons, reduced them to a more sound mind.\*

A learned Dane who has lately visited our shores, expresses admiration at the merit of the Anglo-Saxon homilies. "I have felt," he says, "a high degree of interest in looking into this mirror of Anglo-Saxon divinity, and I doubt not that many an individual on reading these sermons, would form quite another idea of the Anglo-Saxon clergy, than he has imbibed from the current representations of them in our civil and ecclesiastical histories." Noel Deslandes, bishop of Treguier in the sixteenth century, was endowed with such extraordinary powers of persuasion, that the churches could not contain the crowds which assembled to hear his sermons, so that stages used to be erected outside before the windows of cathedrals, upon which auditors were placed. At the consecration of the church at Ferentinum in the year 1191, the almost incredible admiration of the people on hearing the subtle sermon of Cardinal Jordan, is attested by history.† Scarcely had the barefooted Carmelite father Peter made one sermon in Naples, when a change began to appear in the manners of his people. The vast capital became penitent Nineveh. The most desperate sinners, hearing the thunder come from his mouth, shed torrents of tears, and changed their lives, so great was the force of his preaching, joined with the sanctity of his life. In like manner, the sermons of the archbishop of Granada, in the last century, induced multitudes of Spaniards to renounce the custom of carrying poignards. But if we discover in history that such great excellence, and such prodigious effects, belonged to the preaching of men who were otherwise obscure, what must we conclude respecting the merits and influence of the eminent doctors who have left even upon earth imperishable renown ? "In the midst of the church he opened his mouth ; and the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and clothed him with a stole of glory." This is what the Church sings at the commemoration of her canonized teachers, and history, in reference to each, confirms the attestation. Who could enumerate the multitudes that were melted into love and obedience by the meek and gentle flow of that wondrous source of living justice which Cîteaux's cloister furnished in the person of her Bernard ? And still let us keep in mind that all the great preachers of whom we read had been formed by the example and instruction of others whose renown hath perished. It was by hearing the sermon of Jordan, general of the Dominicans, that Albert the Great was moved to enter immediately that order. "Greece," exclaims St. Gregory of Tours, "was

\* Guil. Malmes. in vita ejus Ang. Sac. tom. II.

† Italia Sacra, I.

happy, which deserves to hear Paul preaching ; but Gaul is not forsaken by Christ, to whom the Lord vouchsafes a Martin.”\* St. Romuald in preaching was said to resemble one of the Seraphs, for he burned with a flame of divine love, and kindled those who heard him. Wherever he went to preach, discords were appeased, the poor liberally assisted, the manners and conversation of men reformed. All justice followed works of penance, works of mercy.† No one could ever hear St. Bonaventura preach without loving and venerating him, such a celestial charity was diffused by his very looks. The learned Ambrosius Camaldulensis speaks in admiration of the eloquence of St. Bernardine of Sienna, to whom he writes, on hearing that it is in contemplation to raise him to the episcopal office, apprising him of the universal alarm which the report has produced, lest that dignity should cause an interruption to his sermons, and diminish the effect of his preaching. He styles him the admirable trumpet of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the defender and preacher of poverty, whose cry smites the proudest summits. He speaks of his friend who heard him preach at Rome ; and who describes that inexhaustible and immortal flood of divine eloquence always increasing in magnificence from the sweet lips of brother Bernardine, who with the eloquence of the holy Scriptures, and the omnipotence of the most victorious name of Jesus, had led such multitudes of the highest and lowest degrees from the darkness of ignorance, and the sea of all vices, to embrace with the purest devotion the worship of that most holy name.”\* His fears were groundless ; for though many cities sought Bernardine for their chair, he declared that he would never lay aside the habit and poverty of St. Francis. So that he is represented in painting with three mitres at his feet, to signify his refusal of Sienna, Ferrara, and Milan. When this holy friar first came to Milan, his name was hardly known.

Maffaeus Veggius says, “When I was a boy about twelve years old, I remember seeing him, and hearing him preach to the people, before he was so celebrated ; for I had a grammar master, the best of old men, who loved to hear him, and on festival days he would always go, and lead with him some of his favorite scholars, among whom I was. He used often to say to us, ‘Let us go, boys, to hear that good friar clad in so poor a habit, but with such grace upon his tongue.’ He constantly affirmed that he had never heard any one like him. Trusting to my master’s judgment, and not to my own, which was not prodigious, as you may suppose, at that tender age, I revered the man, and listened to him most attentively, though I could hardly appreciate the weight and majesty of his grave sentences ; but as I believed him to be such as my master judged, all that he said seemed to me to issue from a divine mouth. While thus preaching daily to the people, he was known only to a few of the learned ; but by degrees he began to attract general attention, and at the close of his Lent sermons, so well was

\* Lib, Mirac. de Martini, cap. I.

† Annal. Camaldulens. Lib. LX.

† Annalium Camaldul. Lib. VII.



he appreciated, that from that time nothing was more illustrious than the name of Bernardine. It was wonderful to behold the crowds that flocked to hear him, and that were converted by him. They ran to the church like ants, and there were not priests enough to hear their confessions, and administer the sacraments. In one year the number of communions equalled that of ten ordinary years. Marvellous too, it was to see such numbers of young nobles educated in the utmost delicacy and splendor, now voluntarily seeking the humiliation of the minors, and exchanging profane for holy songs." The preaching of this holy friar was celebrated, not only in Italy, but throughout the world. Copies of his sermons were disseminated through Spain, France, the British Islands, Germany, Hungary, Cyprus, the coast of Asia, Greece, and through many oriental nations. Robbery on the highways, piracy at sea, faction, that had imbued with blood the streets of cities, superstitions and cruelties worthy of Gentiles, profanation and utter neglect of the festivals, the disuse of prayer, and of assisting at mass, atrocious spectacles, all the horrors and desolations which were the seeds of the heresy of the sixteenth century, yielded to his voice. Through this perishing world did he walk, preaching Jesus and the resurrection to judgment, nor was he otherwise received than as an apostle of Christ. The crowds used to assemble at break of day, many coming from a distance of thirty miles to hear him, as if they believed that the Holy Ghost would descend upon them as formerly upon those who believed, on hearing the apostles. No one could describe the fruits which followed his preaching, nor tell how many cities and individuals laid aside enmity for peace, how many licentious youths were reclaimed to a holy life, how many dissipated women were prevailed on to renounce the ways of vanity; restitution, to the amount sometimes of a thousand gold ducats, used to be made; tables for play, and other instruments of dissipation, used to be brought to him, and thrown into the flames, while new hospitals and convents marked every way on which he had passed.\* "O how many lucrative, but sinful kinds of commerce, were renounced!" cries one who had heard him; "how many impositions in buying and selling, how many perjuries and deceptions at an end! How many sons rendered dutiful to their parents; how many parents careful of their children; how many married persons re-united in love and fidelity, how many masters made gentle, how many servants faithful, how many of all classes restored to wisdom, and to the peaceful port of blessed religion! If antiquity extolled Pythagoras for having reformed one city, what praise is due to him who imbued with such superior doctrines innumerable multitudes of people in every state of Italy? At Bologna, he preached from the steps of St. Petronio, and dice-tables were thrown into a vast fire made in the centre of the square. An artizan soon afterwards complained that he could paint nothing else, and that with these he had before supported his family, to whom Bernardine replied, "If you can paint nothing

\* Wad. Ann. Minorum, Vol. IX. and X.

else, paint this figure," and making a circle he formed a sun within it, and in the centre he wrote the name of Jesus, which we can now see under the porch of the good Jesus, with the effigy of the saint. Then the people being directed by Bernardine, came to purchase these new tables, and the man drew more profit than before. A table of this kind on which the holy name was painted within rays of gold, he used to hold in his hand while preaching, and present it from time to time to the people.

Inflamed by his sermons at Florence, after a public supplication, the people erected a vast stone in the square of Santa Croce, on which was inscribed the name of Jesus. It was thus that they replied to the enemies of the holy man, who accused him of extravagance in adopting this manner of expressing veneration for the sacred name. At Sienna, also, after a public solemnity, the magistrates of the city, and clergy, decreed public honors to this tablet, and had it beautifully painted in the characters proposed by Bernardine on the city hall. The fruits of St. Bernardine's preaching were gathered in many cities of Italy long after he had passed from the world, as Robert de Lycio testifies. Several celebrated preachers, however, succeeded him, who were supposed to have imitated his style. John de Capistrano was followed by such multitudes, that it was always necessary in passing through the crowd, to protect him with guards, or torch-bearers, lest he should be suffocated. During forty years from his entering the order of Minors, till the end of his life, he preached constantly to faithful and infidels, the Lord co-operating and confirming his word with signs following. To hear the sermons of Bernardine of Monte Feltro, cities and princes contended with each other. After preaching for some time in Venice, he was about to depart to Padua, to preach there during the Lent of 1417, but the Venetians entreated Vendramino, the doge, to detain him, which he endeavored to do; but the friar replied that he must obey his superiors, and so, during a tempestuous night, he left Venice, while the authorities were preparing to elude the mandate of his superiors, by obtaining letters from Pope Sixtus, ordering him to remain. Again, in 1485, after preaching with great fruit at Parma, in the cathedral, at the end of the year being ordered, by pontifical letters from Innocent VIII., to preach at Bologna, the citizens of Parma applied to the duke of Milan, to request that he would prevent his leaving them. The prefect of the city issued an ordinance to forbid his departure. After some delay, he obtained leave to go to the neighboring convent of his order, and thence he effected his escape during the night, and taking desert mountain ways, succeeded in pursuing his journey safe to the appointed city. The next year, he again preached the Lent at Parma, and before its expiration he received an invitation from the Florentines, who entreated that he would preach the Lent in the following year at Florence. On leaving Padua in 1492, he received deputies from the magistrates of Bassano, Cittadello, Castra Nuova, Novalis, and Asoli, entreating that he would preach at least once in their respective towns. While he was at Florence in 1493, application was made to the vicar

general to order him to preach at so many different places that it was impossible to satisfy them in one year. He was demanded by Brixon, Milan, Ravenna, Perugia, Assisium, Spoleto, Messina, and Palermo. The Spanish ambassador came to him with much reverence, and entreated that he would pass into Spain, where the seeds of sacred doctrine, he said, would yield an abundant harvest. In 1494 he was detained at Mantua, through the intercession of the vicar general, who was perplexed with the multitude of claims respecting him. How many noble cities contended for him! What a sensation in the Roman court! What an emulation among great princes to obtain a sight of one little, humble friar, and have him for a corrector of their manners! Many interesting details are given respecting the enthusiasm with which he was every where received. When he preached at Mantua, not only all the citizens, but all the people within twelve miles of the surrounding country came to hear him, in presence of whom he boldly admonished the marquis Frederic, on account of the injustice and neglect of his government: all trembled for him, but the prince replied to his courtiers, that the friar had done his duty, and that he wished others might follow his example. When he travelled he found it almost always necessary to set out during the night, to avoid the multitude that would follow him; and from Aquilæa, though he departed at midnight, he was attended by vast crowds, from which he could not escape. Sometimes, as at Brixton, he left his companions in the city to conceal more effectually his departure. In 1492, as he approached Castle Franco, the governor of the city, with the chief men, came out to the distance of four miles to meet him, and with the greatest joy led him into the city. When he returned to Monte Feltro, his fellow citizens prepared him a triumphal entry. The houses were all hung with tapestry, and the streets adorned with garlands. The towns were completely filled with the multitude. The inns did not suffice, and many passed the night in the churches and under the porticoes.

The people left the neighboring towns in such numbers, that the magistrates, fearing lest they should be wholly deserted, and so become a prey to the enemy, for the Germans and Venetians were then at war, issued a decree forbidding more than three hundred persons to leave any town at a time. Even the Germans, though but little acquainted with Italian, used to come to his sermons; but these were only admitted for the day, and at night a herald commanded them to leave the city, their wives and children, however, being permitted to sleep in the public porches, the prætor giving them guards, lest they should suffer any injury during the night. At the festival of St. Bernardine of Sienna, a storm came on during his sermon, and as the awning with which the whole market-place was covered became agitated, the people had no shelter from the wind and rain. Through pity for them, he sought twice or thrice to finish his sermon, but each time the whole assembly exclaimed that he should continue, and during a tempest of two hours they heard him preach. Another time, leaving Cremona to preach



on the Sunday at Lodi, more than two thousand persons set off before him, and travelled all night. When the inhabitants of that town rose early in the morning, and came to the forum, the seats which they had prepared for themselves for the occasion, were already occupied by the people of Cremona, whose zeal filled them with admiration. In 1493 being ordered to proceed to Aretium, to repress the tumultuous populace, he left Florence secretly, according to his custom; but yet he could not prevent many nobles, doctors, and religious men, from following him. Leaving Ponte Levano about midnight, he found more than four hundred persons waiting outside the gates to hear him preach. Unwilling to disappoint them, he said mass before break of day, and then from the altar preached for one hour. At Padua, preaching on the festival of St. Antony, the magistrates appointed a certain painter to delineate him as he stood in the pulpit. Approaching Clarina, a grammarian with his scholars came to meet him, and recited certain verses in his praise, whom he exhorted to instruct youth in Christian manners and piety. Would you hear now what were the fruits of his apostolic labors? On these history is not silent. After leaving Parma in 1496, on arriving at Modena, when about to send back the guide, lo, he beheld this youth at his feet, offering him the horse which had carried his books. "O man of God," said he, "I owe thee greater things than this horse; for it has been owing to your words of fire that two debtors of my late father, whose debts were wholly unknown to me, and of which he made no mention in his will, have come to our house, bringing with them the entire sums which they owed to him, in consequence of which I have risen from a wretched to a happy condition."

Such were every where the results of his sermons. In 1483 the inhabitants of Pavia were filled with astonishment at their own reformation. "Lo," said they, "that usurer! how liberal he is now to the poor! that intemperate youth, how he curbs his concupiscence! how retired and bashful is become that modest woman! how many are recalled from evil arts and vanity!" The magistrates observing the effects, published a decree, ordering that all shops should be closed while he was preaching; but he objected to this measure, and persuaded them to withdraw it, and from that time no shop was left open. Here he burnt in one fire objects to the value of two thousand pieces of gold. At his sermons in Sienna, Modena, Parma, and other places, he committed to the flames what were termed castles of Satan, immense piles composed of prohibited books, vain ornaments, cards, and tables. He burnt, at Perugia, books of magic, necromancy, and evil arts, to which that people were addicted, and at Brixon the novels of Boccaccio. He also persuaded scholastic preceptors in various places to cease from explaining Martial's epigrams, Ovid's amatory poetry, Petronius, and other such authors. On leaving Pavia, the citizens erected a new pulpit in the square near the cathedral, on the spot where he had preached. On this they placed his image, under which were inscribed these words, which he used frequently to repeat, "Nolite diligere mundum." On coming to Florence in

1493, Peter de Medicis and the senate had taken alarm, and he was forbidden to preach within the city. When leave was at length granted, he preached in the great square, which was not large enough to contain the multitude, so that the people occupied the roofs and windows of the houses, anxious at least to behold his gestures from a distance. On the following day, many relations of those who had subscribed the edict for expelling him the Florentine state, came and sought his forgiveness, and implored his benediction for themselves and their families. At Florence he preached every day. In his sermon he spared no abuse, and feared no power. At Padua he preached against timid or corrupt judges, who were moved either by fear or gifts.

In 1492, at Viglevano, he preached in the Franciscan church, in presence of Lewis Sforza, duke of Milan, and Beatrice of Este, his wife, and all their ministers; he showed what were the duties of the prince, the proper stipends of ministers, the necessity of paying the debts of creditors, which were then one source of great complaint, and the duty of honoring blessed Mary, towards whom that court had long been noted for its irreverence. On descending, the duke publicly thanked him, and within two days he paid all his debts even to the last farthing, and moreover decreed that in future the dukes of Milan should always celebrate the festival of the immaculate conception, in the church of St. Francis, at Milan, and after the office, distribute great alms to the poor. In 1493, he consoled by his sermons the afflicted and humiliated citizens of Perugia, inveighing against tyranny, hatred, and murder, introducing the persons of the ancient tyrants, Domitian, Nero, Leo, and Dionysius. At these sermons, Guido Ballionus, head of the chief faction, sat always opposite the pulpit, that his presence might intimidate him; but Bernardine was so little daunted, that he kept his eyes fixed on him, while at his look the tyrant turned pale and betrayed the utmost internal anxiety. At Vicenza, he repressed with a divine power, the vanities of the carnival, so that the impatient youth was persuaded to relinquish its accustomed, and ardently expected amusements; but here the vein which he had ruptured shortly before, when preaching in the town of St. Cassian, again burst, and from that time his dissolution approached rapidly, while he was obliged by physicians to refrain from all exertion during short intervals. At his last sermon, before leaving Padua, he seemed to foresee that he was never to return there. Weak and suffering, he was received into Pavia, amidst triumphant acclamations, and he began his sermon by an allusion to his own approaching death, saying, "Physician cure thyself; apply thy doctrine to thine own heart." But this digression the hearers did not understand till afterwards. Bernardine of Monte Feltro and John de Capistrano, were not, however, the only eminent preachers who succeeded the holy advocate of Sienna. The friars, Matthew of Sicily, Antonio of Bitonto, John of Prato, James Donzelli of Bologna, Sylvester of Sienna, Antonio of Rimini, Michael of Milan, Antonio of Vercellis, Cherubino of Spoleto, Dominicus of Padua, and Theodoric of Osnaburg, a minor of Cologne, and celebrated through-

out Germany, were all conspicuous on the holy mountain, as preaching the precepts of the Lord. Thomas Illyricus, surnamed in France, *le saint homme*, was a preacher whose holy doctrine watered all Europe. This was the friar so dear to pope Clement VII. and who preached with such boldness against the vices of ecclesiastics, and of men in all orders of the state, openly predicting the heresy of Luther fifty years before it broke out, so that he is styled the Cassandra of our evils by Floremund Remund, counsellor of the Parliament of Bordeaux, in his learned work, *De ortu hæreseon*.\* These lights have led us to the close of the fifteenth century. Let us go back then to more ancient days.

What would it have been, think you, reader, to have heard St. Bonaventura preach, or to have sat at the feet of the profound and fervent Francis, listening to those simple, moving exhortations which converted whole generations to the love of poverty, and the obedience of Christ! It often happened that more than thirty persons would be converted to penitence, after hearing one of his sermons.† A contemporary monk of St. Justina, at Padua, in his chronicle of the events which passed in Lombardy, describes the effects prescribed by the two trumpets of heaven, Dominick and Francis, which awakened the sleeping world with a fearful sound, and excited men to battle against the triple enemy. Hell to its centre felt the power of their preaching, which cut off its wonted supplies at the source. All Asti, we read, was moved at the voice of Francis. All began to fear and obey God, to forgive one another, to forget injuries, to bury hatreds, to renounce usury, to make restitution, to avoid pomps and plays, and every kind of luxury. Turin could only be consoled at his departure when he pronounced his solemn blessing over the city, in the words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. At Cortemilla the country people left their ploughs and implements in the fields, and flocked in to hear his discourses on the vanity of the world which passes away, the penalty that awaits sinners, and the everlasting beatitude of the just. The hardest hearts were split like rocks of the desert, and the waters of contrition flowed from them. Whenever he entered towns or castles, the clergy used to go forth to meet him the bells were rung, men exulted, women rejoiced, and the boys and children came out with branches in their hands, glorifying God.‡

The first act recorded of the blessed Sylvester, the Florentine, indicated the enthusiasm which was produced by a preacher whose sermons he loved to hear; for in the year 1312 he used to assist at the sermons of brother Jordan of Pisa, a celebrated Dominican, in the convent of S. Maria Novella at Florence, who preached with great effect not only in the churches, but in the streets of the city, and while pausing to rest between the divisions of his discourse, Sylvester used to present him with wine, by which attention he first attracted the notice of the preacher and subsequently became his disciple.§

\* Lib. I. c. 3, and 4.

† Les Chroniques des Freres Mineurs, Lib. II. c. 35.

‡ Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, tom. I.

§ *Annal. Camaldulens.* Lib. XLVII.



Berthold of Ratisbon, a Franciscan in the time of Frederick II., commended among the illustrious writers of Germany, whose sepulchre is seen in the convent of the friars at Ratisbon, on which is inscribed nothing but "Bertholdus magnus Prædicator," had such a grace of preaching, that often sixty, and sometimes even a hundred thousand persons would assemble to hear him, and wait during many hours for his arrival. The field near Glatz in Bohemia, where he used to preach, is called the field of Berthold to this day. On one occasion, he spoke with such force against the sin of luxury, that a certain woman who was a public sinner is said to have expired through contrition on the spot, though others say that she was restored to life, by the intercession of the holy preacher, who rebuked the people for ascribing it to the judgment of God.\* St. Anthony of Padua preaching at Limoges, such was the multitude of people that there was no church large enough to contain them, and he preached in the open air. A certain woman greatly desiring to hear him, and her husband not choosing to permit her, as it was a league distance from the town, she went up into the granary, in order at least to content her eyes by looking towards the spot where he was at that moment preaching the word of God.† Similarly at Padua, there was no church large enough to contain the crowds that flocked to hear him, and he therefore used to preach in the open air, and sometimes in a great field without the walls.

The people used to rise by night, and hasten with lanterns to keep places in the field, when it was known he was to preach. There you might have found illustrious nobles and high-born dames humbly clothed, passing through the obscure night undisguised from the people. During his sermons, the shops used to be closed, the courts of justice suspended, as if it had been a solemn festival, and with such deep attention was he followed, that among thirty thousand persons no word of interruption could be heard, and if he had not had guards round him, the people would have torn off his clothes out of devotion, to possess themselves of its fragments. Wherever he preached, quarrels were appeased, debtors were liberated, restitution was made of goods, and there were not priests sufficient to hear the confessions of the penitent people.‡ Some minor friars journeying, overtook a very old man returning from Rome, who told them, in course of conversation, that he had known their great preacher. St. Anthony of Padua, and that formerly he was one of twelve robbers who used to lie in wait in the woods to plunder travellers. "We used to hear," said he, "of the wonderful preaching of this holy man and how more than twenty thousand persons used to assemble when he preached, and we all felt great curiosity to see him. So we changed our dresses, and disguised our faces, and went to the place where he was preaching, and heard him. It seems like yesterday when I think of that hour in which we felt our hearts melting like wax before the fire at the sound of his voice. We became contrite

\* Wadding, *Annal. Minorum*, tom. 10. a. 1272.

† Id. *Lib. c. v. 21*

‡ Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, tom. I.

for our wicked lives, we grieved, we wept, we lay upon the earth. Finally we took courage, addressed the saint, and confessed all our sins. Would that I could explain, but I cannot, how piously, how paternally, he received us. What celestial doctrine, what words of salvation he administered, what promises he gave us if we persevered in God's service, what threats he held out if like dogs we should 'return to our vomit.' Some few of us did return to our old wickedness, whom I myself saw perish shortly afterwards in horrible torment. All the rest continued holy and made a blessed end. On me, besides other penance, he imposed the obligation of visiting twelve times the threshold of the apostles. I am now returning with a light heart from my twelfth visit to the sacred city, hoping that in me will be fulfilled the promise of the holy man, whose doctrine, as far as human infirmity permits, I have, from that time, endeavored always to observe."\*

During a mission which St. Francis Regis made in the wild and mountainous country of the Vivares, one day as he left a church, he met a troop of people, who came up and said, "Father, do not refuse us the consolation of hearing you preach; since yesterday we have travelled twelve leagues through horrible ways, in order to have this satisfaction." The holy priest, sustained by his zeal, returned into the church, and made them a pathetic exhortation. John d'Avila, surnamed the apostle of Andalusia, from the great effects which followed his preaching, was delivering a sermon in praise of St. Sebastian, at the hermitage dedicated to that martyr, on the heights above the city of Granada, when John of God first heard him. He spoke with such force of the happiness of those who suffer for Jesus Christ, that his words proved so many burning darts in the heart of this obscure stranger youth, who from that moment became incapable of ever afterwards loving temporal things.† St. Philip Neri once preached a sermon upon non-residence, before the Pope Gregory XV., which had the effect of sending thirty bishops to their respective diocese the following day. Thomas à Kempis was surnamed the hammer, from the force with which he was able to strike the hearts of sinners. Nor did the highest ecclesiastical dignity interfere with the exercise of these wondrous powers of persuasion, as the sermons of Gregory and Leo, and innumerable other pontiffs can bear witness. After hearing Hildebrand preach, when prior of Cluny, the emperor Henry III. exclaimed that he had never heard a man preach the word of God with such boldness.‡ This was the renowned light which subsequently from the seventh Gregory illuminated the whole church. It is supposed that Dante first conceived the idea of his immortal poem from hearing this holy cardinal Hildebrand preach in Arezzo, before pope Nicholas II. on the punishment which is visited upon lost sinners.

Let us now proceed to make some general observations respecting the preaching of the clergy during the middle ages, of which we have already collected

\* Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, tom. V. 1292.

† Hist. de la Vie de St. Jean de Dieu.

‡ Paul Bernried.

sufficient examples from the pages of our ancient history. That the importance of such instruction was fully recognized, and that provision was made to supply it to the people, may be our first conclusion. As in the first ages, during the sermon the church was open to all persons, even to avowed infidels, which circumstance accounts for the silence of the fathers respecting Christian mysteries. The great St. Francis had such a veneration for preachers who announced the Word of God, that he used to say, if he should meet a priest and an angel descended from heaven, he would first kiss the hand of the priest and then pay his reverence to the angel.

"If every discipline," says St. Augustin, "however mean and easy, requires a doctor or master that it may be learned, what more full of rash pride than to be unwilling to learn the books of the divine sacraments from their interpreters."\* The church in the most solemn celebration of her greatest mysteries, reminds the faithful that their faith comes from hearing. Thus in the prose, she sings, "*Docti sacris institutis ; dogma datur Christianis.*" Independent of supernatural causes, the superior efficacy of oral over written instruction, was shown by the great moralists of antiquity. Socrates remarks, that persons who apply to written sources, often esteem it of more importance to understand the words that are written than the things about which they are written.† Learning and philosophy in the middle ages gave no dispensation to neglect hearing the humble minister who announced in the church the mysteries of redemption. St. Bernard and Peter of Blois, and Alanus de Insulis, are expressly recorded to have preached in the schools of Paris before the masters and scholars. Sermons used to be preached in universities on all the great festivals, on the patron anniversaries of each particular school and nation, on the feasts of St. Nicholas and St. Catherine, and during Lent ; which discourses were to be suited to the capacities of the young as well as of those more advanced in philosophy.‡ The solicitude which the church evinced that the people should be supplied with instruction in the form that was suitable to them, has not been sufficiently pointed out by modern writers. We find that in the eighth century the council of Rheims prescribed to ecclesiastics who should preach in Latin, to repeat their homilies in the Roman Rustic or Theodesque tongue which was then better understood. The fourth canon of the council of Tours, orders that every bishop should translate his Latin sermons into the Tudesque language ; and the same injunction is repeated by the council of Arles in 851, on the ground that the homilies of the clergy may be more easily understood by all. This council prescribes that they should preach on the Catholic faith, on the eternal rewards of the just, and damnation of the wicked, on the future resurrection and last judgment.

In the eleventh century Guibert, the venerable abbot of Nogent, in his book,

\* De Utilitate credendi. 35.

† Plato Phædrus.

‡ Buælus, Hist. Universit. Parisiens. tom. II.



"*Quo Ordine Sermo fieri debeat*," which was recommended as a manual by Pope Alexander, to all preachers, insists principally upon observing a style that will be intelligible and edifying to the common people. "To the illiterate," saith he, "plain and simple things must be preached; but to the learned a preacher may mingle things more sublime that may please their capacity, but so that at the end he may come round again to address the simple and unlearned, that these may go away instructed and consoled. To children not only milk, which is indispensable, but sometimes a crust of bread also is given, and in like manner, while simple doctrine should be preached to the vulgar, some deeper things may be added which will please both the more intellectual auditors, and excite the attention of the others, who are often attracted by what sounds new and difficult. We should preach with great moderation on the sacraments of faith, for from too profound preaching error may arise among the less intelligent; but it is more easy and secure to treat of virtues and vices, for all our efforts should have in view the manners of the interior man, whose passions being common to all, every man will find the meaning of the preacher's words in his own heart: and no preaching seems to me more wholesome than that which shows a man to himself, and enables him to behold what passes in his own interior. To form the preacher, not alone study, but experience, and the knowledge of other men's minds, and of his own is necessary: his style should be in conformity with that of the Holy Scriptures, and he should be familiarly acquainted with the different senses of all the phrases and expressions used in them. Above all, the auditors must be impressed with a conviction that the preacher speaks sincerely and without any intention or desire of praise, not for the sake of money or ostentation, which more than all would offend them, but having in view only the salvation of those who hear him."\* To the same effect were the directions which St. Francis gave to his friars in the year 1220. He tells them that their sermons should be for the utility and edification of the people, on vices and virtues, pain and glory. Such also was the example which he set them, as may be witnessed in his preaching in 1219, before the immense assembly when St. Dominick and Cardinal Hugolinus were present, when his theme was thus delivered:—

"Magna promissimus; raajora promissa sunt nobis:  
 Servemus hæc; adspiremus ad illa.  
 Voluptas brevis; pœna perpetua.  
 Modica passio; gloria infinita.  
 Multorum vocatio; paucorum electio,  
 Omnium retributio."

"We must preach," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "justice to the unjust, truth to the ignorant, and salvation to the impious." It is clear from what we have seen that the solicitude of the Church was admirably served by the indefatigable

\* Guiberti Abb. Novig. Lib. *Quo Ordine Sermo fieri debeat*.

zeal of her ministers. The blessed James Picinus, a minor friar, whose preaching was celebrated through Italy, discharged that office with such obedience, that during forty-seven years he preached almost every day to the people, and occasionally in three or four places on one day, and yet such was the austerity of his life, that he passed the greatest part of the night in meditation, after singing the divine office with the brethren.\* St. Vincent Ferrier preached to the people every day, as did also St. Bernardine of Sienna, till within a few days of his death. On the Friday before the Ascension, preaching in the old ducal town of Phalacrina, Bernardine implored his auditors to pray for his happy passage, and it was immediately after this last most sweet discourse, which had dissolved the multitude in tears, that he was seized with fever. Then he told his companions that he had finished his sermons, and that he was going to leave his bones in the city of Aquilana. Thither he went in great weakness and suffering, but refreshed with celestial visions. On the Sunday he entered that city amidst the greatest devotion and congratulations of the people. The magistrates and nobles sent him the best physicians; but nothing could arrest the disease. At Nones on the vigil of the Ascension, he expired with a smile while the brethren were singing that antiphon at vespers, "*Pater, manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus.*"†

Bernardine, of Monte Feltro, when at Sienna, used to preach three times each day. He used to repair to cities infected with the plague, and when the magistrates desired him to desist lest such assemblies might increase the evil, he would reply, that the word of the Lord and not herbs and medicines, would save the perishing people. It was a common remark that those who went to his sermons were never or rarely attacked.‡ In 1481 he preached at Venice in the square of St. Mark, there being no church large enough, every day from Palm Sunday till the octave of the Resurrection. This holy friar, in proportion as his strength failed, on the approach of death, only preached with the greater fervency. Shortly after his arrival at Pavia, the people observing his weakness, and that he could not walk without a staff, entreated that he would repose at least for three days. Even when the fever increased he was unwilling to remain in bed, but at the door of his chamber in his convent of St. James, which adjoined the church, he received the chief men and magistrates of the city, and exhorted them to live well. To the last he continued to join in the office, and to administer salutary instruction, till, amidst the psalmody of the brethren, without any sign of perturbation, with a placid and serene countenance, his spirit passed at the tenth hour of the night on the vigil of St. Michael.§

We have seen how the fervor and assiduity of the people corresponded with the solicitude of the church, and of her ministers. It was a common precaution of all the great preachers of the middle ages, to travel by night, lest their departure should be prevented. St. Vincent Ferrier shortly before his death, feeling a great

\* Ann. Min. tom. IX.

† Ann. Min. tom. XI.

‡ Id. tom. XIV.

§ Id. tom. XV.

anxiety to return to Spain in order to die there, set out from Vannes mounted on an ass at midnight, and for the same reason as obliged the Italian preachers to choose that hour for beginning their journeys.\* That solicitude was also seconded by the zeal of persons in civil authority, who generally seemed to have no object so much at heart as the religious instruction of the people. We read of the prefect of the citadel of Peschara, on the lake of Garda, a noble man of the Vitturina family, procuring, in 1471, Bernardine Feltrensis to preach frequently to the soldiers of the garrison.† Such solicitude would be little in harmony with the spirit of later times. Æneas was a celebrated preacher in the days of Charles the Bald. "Whoever touched the threshold of the palace," exclaims his contemporary, the Archbishop of Sens, "to whom the labor of Æneas and his fervor in divine things did not appear?"‡

Notwithstanding the ardor for preaching which distinguished the religious innovators, the result even in regard to the quantity of instruction supplied, was very contrary to what the generality of modern readers suppose. In fact it was not so easy to find a substitute for the steady principle of faith, and the zeal of men of the interior life truly devoted without any personal ambition. The chiefs of the new doctrine were, indeed, indefatigable men, and possessed of an energy and an activity which seems also incredible. There were, as Burton at length confesses, "superstition often in hearing of sermons, bitter contentions, invectives, persecutions, strange conceits, besides diversity of opinions, schisms, and factions." At Geneva ministers were sent to the villages to compel the rustics to come to the preaching. Nevertheless, upon the whole the ministers were deficient even in the very quality which they seemed to prefer to every other; for while a few chiefs were reaping laurels by their eloquence, the inferior preachers lapsed into supine indifference, insomuch that Strype says that "a thousand pulpits in England were covered with dust. Some had not had four sermons in fifteen or sixteen years, since friars left their limitation, and few of those," he adds, "were worthy the name of sermons."|| In comparison of Catholic ages the contrast continued to later times almost equally striking, so that the anglican bishop of Llandaff, speaking of Wesley, confessed lately in a sermon at Abergavenny, that he found thousands of his countrymen, though nominally Christians, yet as ignorant as heathens, and in too many instances, it is useless," he added, "to conceal or disguise the fact either through the inattention of government in not providing for increased numbers or through the carelessness and neglect of those whom the national church had appointed to be their pastors."

Again, it must be observed that the clergy of the middle ages taught as men having authority, and not like those who look to the civil government, or to national institutions, or to any human source, for their advancement or

\* Lobineau, Hist. de Bret. Lib. IX.

† Annal. Minorum, Vol. XIII.

‡ Bulaeus, Hist. Universit Paris, tom. 1.

§ Book III. 4.

|| Strype II. 15.



direction. "Docendus est populus, non sequendus," is the maxim of the canons,\* which admitted of no exception in favor of kings or statesmen, as may be witnessed in the epistle of St. Ambrose, in which he refuses to contend with Auxentius the Arian bishop, in the imperial consistory, where the emperor was to be the judge. He appeals to the former imperial rescript, which declared that in matters of faith no one should judge who was not of the ecclesiastical order, and competent by gift and authority, which was to say that priests alone should judge of priests. "When was it ever heard," he asks, "that laics might judge a bishop, or that a priest might concede to others what was entrusted to him by God? On the contrary it is for bishops to judge between Christian emperors, not for emperors to judge between bishops. Ambrose is not of such importance, that for his sake the priesthood should fall to the ground. The life of one man is not of such consequence as the dignity of all priests. If a matter is to be treated upon, I have learned to treat in the church. If we are to confer concerning the faith, it must be in a conference of priests. If Auxentius should appeal to the Synod, that he may dispute about the faith, it is not just that so many bishops should be fatigued for the sake of one, who even if he were an angel from heaven, ought not to be preferred to the peace of the church; therefore, O emperor, graciously receive my answer, that to the consistory I cannot come. I have not learned to stand up in the consistory, and within the palace, I who neither inquire nor have known the secrets of the palace, cannot contend."†

St. Francis preaching at Spoleto in the public square, began his sermon with these words, "Angeli, homines, dæmones." This, you say, would be deemed extraordinary at present. True, and some learned critics at the time who stood in the crowd, thought it was rash, but when has an academic oration produced the effects which followed that sermon, when a whole city from being torn with dissensions and enmities, was re-united in love, and when a crowd of sanguinary nobles were transformed into pacific and blessed men! When Ferrara was besieged by the Venetians, 1483, the inhabitants invited Bernardine of Monte Feltro to preach to them. At the great peril of his life, he was introduced into the city, and delivered sermons every day in the cathedral against the licence of the citizens, the rapine of soldiers, and all kinds of injustice usual in war. In one sermon, deploring the vices of the people, and describing the wrath of God which was hanging over them, the whole multitude began to implore the divine mercy with tears. The friar wept also, but then changing his tone, exclaimed, "O Ferrara, because it repenteth thee to have sinned, it pleaseth God to have mercy on thee. Thou shalt be delivered from this siege, and restored to thy former felicity, but beware of returning to sin, lest God should compensate the delay by the gravity of his doom."‡ The clergy, moreover, taught as persons who had faith in their own doctrines, and not like men who seem ever ready to ad-

\* Ivo[nis] Carnot. Decret. Pars. XVI. 14. † Epist. Lib. V 32. ‡ Ann. Minorum, tom. XIV.

mit that they defend only a cause of secondary importance, and to concede to every sophist who advances a principle at variance with what they teach. Their tone in general was rather that of St. Augustin, where he argues against those who said that ecclesiastical celibacy would injure population and shorten the duration of the world, and begins by exclaiming, "Would to God that all were so determined with a pure heart, a right conscience, and with faith, and the duration of this world would be shortened,"\* a boldness for which his opponents were but little prepared. Neither did they profess to unfold new views in theology, or to preach as from themselves. The sermon which S. Gall preached in Constance on the entrance of the bishop may be read in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*. Hildefons von Arx observes, "that it is historical, and wholly in the style of the apostles, relating all the chief events of revelation from the creation of the world to that time,"† which was the general manner of preaching during the middle ages, as may be proved from all ancient collections.

Here it must be confessed, the religious innovators at all times had the advantage of them, though Fuller complains that "aged pastors in consequence were justified out of respect by young preachers, not having half their age, nor a quarter of their learning and religion. "English Athenians," saith he, "are all for novelties, new sects, new schisms, new doctrines, new disciplines, new prayers, new preachers."‡ The Catholic clergy had no such inducements to offer, but as St. Augustin says, "What they found in the church they held; what they learned they taught; what they received from the fathers, they delivered to sons."§ Hence the person of the preacher entered for a little into the influence of the ecclesiastical instructions. The religious innovators seem to have paid but slight attention to the denouncement of woe against him who putteth his hope in man.|| With them the inquiries were unremitting respecting who was the best preacher, who had the most eloquent delivery, or the soundest doctrine; but in the Catholic Church the instructions of the clergy assumed a totally different character, and as they emanated from a higher source, so was the instrument of their communication generally lost sight of. Even of the sacraments a wicked priest hindered not the grace, which article of faith St. Anselm illustrates by remarking that Joseph sought and received the body of Jesus from Pilate who was an infidel.¶ "Non exhorreat columba ministerium malorum," says St. Augustin; much less was simplicity an obstacle.\*\* In general whoever was thought to lead the holiest life was chosen for the preacher. The blessed Gandulphus de Benasco, of Milan, in the year 1260, being grieved at hearing frequently his own praises, fled from his convent with one companion and passed into Sicily where he took up his abode on a wild mountain near Politium. His manner of life becoming known, the chief inhabitants of that town requested that he would preach the Lent sermons, which

\* De bono Conjug. cap. 10.

† Geschichte des Kantons, St. Gallen. I. 18.

‡ Fuller's Thoughts, 208.

§ St. August. Lib. II. cont Julianum.

|| Jerem. xvii. 5.

¶ Elucidarium, Lib. I. c. 30.

\*\* Supra. Joan, tom. V.

he did, preferring the general utility to his own quiet. On the fourth feria of holy week he predicted to the people that he spoke to them for the last time, and in fact while returning that day to the hospice his strength failed him, and on holy Saturday he slept in the Lord, when all the clergy and people carried his sacred body with great solemnity to the mother church, and then buried him in the humble spot which he had pointed out to them.\* Thus a poor stranger was preferred by the people, and permitted without envy by the local clergy to discharge the most honorable function. The voice which announced the Word of God was listened to as something different from a human voice, and the authority of each preacher clad in the sacred vestments was felt to be the same. That in primitive times, when somewhat of the heathen spirit of inquiry and of curiosity must have still influenced the minds of men, there was less consistency of manners and feeling in this respect than during the middle ages, may be inferred from the reproof of St. Ambrose. "I have found out, brethren," saith he, "that during my absence so few of you come to the church as if on my going away you had gone with me, and when I am drawn off by necessities, the same necessity compelled you also to go. So we are both alike absent from the house of God ; I from necessity, and you from choice. Do you not know that though I am absent from the church, Christ who is every where is not absent from it? Brother, you come to the church. There you do not find the bishop, but if you come faithfully you will find there the Bishop of bishops, the Saviour. For Christians who go to the church only when the bishop is present, seem to go not so much for the sake of God, as of man, not to fulfil the office of a Christian who fears, but the service of an obsequious friend. But why do I reprove you when you can put me to silence with one word. For I see that clerks are more negligent than you, and how can I correct sons when I am not able to amend brethren ; or with what confidence can I be angry with laymen, when I am shamed by my follow-laborers ? I speak not of all, certainly there are some devout and others negligent. I name no one. Let each one's conscience answer."†

The generality of modern French writers—no English authors condescend as yet to investigate such questions—do not seem to suppose that there could have been any preacher of correct taste and genuine eloquence before the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. If I understand the Abbé Gouget aright, he was of opinion that until that period there was nothing evinced but bad taste and ignorance in the composition of sermons. Certainly, the preachers of the middle age, in composing or publishing sermons, had other views besides those of literary renown. If Jerome, a hermit of Camaldoli and apostle of Lithuania, who fled from Prague his native city, when his name became associated with the crimes and errors of faithless men, published sermons for Lent, and for the festivals of the saints and for all Sundays, which he had preached in Poland before King Vladislaus and his

\* Wadding. An. IV. 1260.

† Serm. LXXXIII.



knights, he declares that his motive was that the reader might pray for him.\* These sermons, which were in the library of the desert of Camaldoli, were entitled, "A Lent of Salvation," "Examples of Eternal Salvation," and "Lines of Eternal Salvation;" titles which alone are enough to prove how little he was actuated by views of literary vanity. Nevertheless we have already had sufficient evidence to show the groundlessness of such limitations, and, indeed, it may be much doubted, whether a familiar acquaintance with the ecclesiastical discourses of the middle ages, be the best preparation for enjoying the magnificent prose of Bossuet, or of Massillon, of which the artificial and perhaps sometimes ostentatious tone, would induce one to look back with any thing but contempt upon the plain, majestic, unaffected style of the ancient preachers.

Pignotti, after observing the great eloquence which characterizes the sermons of the friar Savonarola, adds, "I hesitate not to affirm that some of his sermons are preferable to the false eloquence made use of by many modern sacred orators, in whom the truths of the Gospel, instead of being adorned by decent attire, are on the contrary disguised in a swollen and far-fetched style, wherein we discover the badly-tempered colors of poetry, without the inspiration it ought to display."†

"Compare," says a French historian," the sacred eloquence of the sixth century to that of the modern pulpit, even in the seventeenth century. Open the modern sermons, they have evidently more of a literary than of a practical character. The orator aspires rather to beauty of language, to the intellectual satisfaction of his hearers, than to act upon their souls, and produce real and efficacious conversion. Nothing of this kind, nothing literary appears in the sermons of those ages; no desire of speaking well, of combining images and ideas with art. The orator goes to the fact, does not fear repetitions, familiarity, nor even vulgarity; he speaks for a short time, but he recommences every morning. It is not sacred eloquence, it is religious power."

It had been remarked in the middle ages, that Christ gives no full comments or continued discourse, but as Demetrius, the rhetorician, phrases it, speaks oft in monosyllables, like a master scattering the heavenly grain of his doctrine as pearls here and there. This character belongs to the instructions of the clergy of that epoch. There is no study of effect observable in them, although they feed on thoughts that voluntarily move harmonious numbers; and when there is occasion to awe brute violence, their words are like those of Æschylus, few, but having brows and crests, and clothed in terror. There are even sermons wholly in verse of the thirteenth century, which the Benedictines believe to have been delivered from the pulpit. In the great Franciscan and Dominican preachers we have no verbose declamations, or the ingenious eloquence of a speculative discourse; but we are struck with the solemn majesty of their apostolic style, so imbued with the sense of the holy Scriptures, and with the sentences of sacred tra-

\* Annal. Camaldul. Lib. LVIII.

† Hist. of Tuscany, III. chap. 10.

dition. They are quick, sententious, impressive, and even learned. The blessed Cherubin of Spoleto, never or rarely preached without a long previous study of what he was to say. Being asked by Cardinal Sabello, the legate of Umbria, why he spent so much time in preparation, after having such long experience, the holy friar replied, "Though my life has been spent in preaching, yet I never dare to preach without spending previously at least seven hours in study of the holy Scriptures, and in meditation."\* Bernardine of Monte Feltro used to say mass before sunrise, that he might have time to meditate on what he was to preach that day. St. Bernardine of Sienna must have had the whole Bible by heart, to judge from the style of his discourses. The great mysteries of salvation are the general theme of their instruction. Blessed Guido de Spathis, a most fervent and efficacious preacher of the fourteenth century, used always to hold a great nail in his hand when addressing the people, to keep constantly in his mind the memory of the Passion of Christ. This nail is still preserved in the convent of the Minors at Bologna, where he is represented holding it in his hand, with an inscription which attests the multitudes of sinners whom he turned to the wisdom of the just.

*"Angelicum virum recale per omnia mirum,  
Publicas convertens, publicanosque et sœvientes.  
Hunc Deus elegit, qui corda saxeæ fregit."*†

Bernardine of Monte Feltro, used to distribute papers on which the name of Jesus was written, which the devout multitude received with eagerness from his hand.

Manzoni remarks, that among the many inconveniences of the oratorical spirit, by which it is in opposition with the logical and moral spirit, one of the most common and most sensible is, that it exaggerates the good or evil of a thing, forgetting the connection that it has with something else. So that it tends to weaken or even to destroy a complication of truths, from a wish to overstrain one, and consequently even destroys this one. This is the spirit of those who, wishing to magnify some one or other religious practice, ascribe undue power to it; and though it is true that in abandoning themselves to this miserable intemperance of mind, they do not fail at other times to administer correctives, the evil remains without being remedied, and all their other instruction becomes incombinate with this particular doctrine. From this defect the preachers of the middle age are wholly free. Their scholastic style gained in precision what it lost in rhetorical effect. Their eloquence was not, indeed, that kind for which men formerly raised to orators golden statues in the temple of the Pythian Apollo. It did not indicate that rhetorical skill which Socrates compared to cookery, or to any other art of flattery; ‡ but it was not, therefore, found powerless and inefficient in converting men to justice.

\* Ann. Minorum, tom XIV.

† Ann Minorum, tom. VII.

‡ Plat. Georgias.

A certain preacher at Puy complained to father John Filleau, provincial of the Jesuits, saying, that the sermons which St. Francis Regis was then delivering, were not composed with sufficient art, and that he did not keep up the dignity which should attend the word of God. The provincial took him to the church when the saint was to preach. During the sermon the provincial wept, and on going out said, "Would to God that all might preach with this divine unction. Let us leave the holy man to speak with his apostolic simplicity; the finger of God is here."

Amazed at the reformation of manners which attended the preaching of St. Francis of Assisium, learned men attempted to discover by what arts he attained such prodigious success, "but let the curious lovers of mundane eloquence know," says a contemporary, "that his school was the Gospel, and his master Christ."

Maffæus Veggius speaks of the preaching of St Bernardine, and cries, "Who can describe the grace and dignity of his pronounciation, the sweetness and gravity of his style! Nature alone had taught him the perfection of the highest art of eloquence. On solemn days, when the multitude is composed of all sorts of people, his style was full of variety, in order that there might be somewhat to edify all, and as he was naturally cheerful, he often mixed pleasant with grave things. With all this, his learning was prodigious, and his knowledge of the evangelic doctrine profound. Moreover, he had a knowledge of many things, and experience of various manners, for, as he had visited all the cities of Italy, he knew the peculiar faults of each, and could prescribe the proper remedy; but in reprehending vices, he spared men, and always spoke with such consummate prudence, lest the light vulgar should be excited by him, so that he never uttered a word that could give scandal; and, indeed, he used to say, that from the time he first began to preach, he never uttered a word excepting with the intention of honoring and praising God." I can easily conceive the enthusiasm of his hearers, when I find that, even to a reader, his sermons furnish a study that is full of instruction and delight. Their short sentences, pregnant with subtle and profound truths, keep the attention constantly alive. They not only charm and edify, they surprise each moment, and yield a pleasure ever new and inexhaustible.

That eloquence should be studied expressly for the religious instruction of the people, was shown by Raban Maur in his Institutes of Clerks. "Who would dare to say," he asks, "that virtue should be powerless in its defenders? That they who endeavor to persuade false things, should know how to render their hearers benevolent, intent, and docile, but that these should not know? That the one should be able to relate false things briefly, clearly and plausibly, and that the other should so mention true things, that it would be tedious to hear, difficult to understand, and lastly impossible to believe them? That the one retaining the minds of their hearers in error or impelling them to it, should be able by speaking to terrify, to sadden, to exhilarate, and ardently to exhort, while the others, on the side of truth, should be slow, frigid, and soporiferous? "Quis ita desipiat, ut hoc



sapiat?"\* "Three things," says Hugo of St. Victor, "are required in a preacher. Sanctity of conversation, perfection of science, and eloquence to win grace, that his discourse may be holy, prudent, and noble."†

As in early times,‡ it was common during the middle ages to see short-hand writers taking down notes of the sermons of preachers.§ Those of Savonarola used to be printed the day after they were pronounced, and sent in detached sheets to all parts of Italy. Certainly such passages and customs imply both a sense of the importance and great ability in the exercise of sacred eloquence. Nevertheless, its force was in simplicity and sanctity.

The Bernardines, the Vincent Ferriers, the Suffrens, and generally in all ages of the church, the preachers who excited the greatest movement, were humble men, who desired no other eloquence but that of sincerity, no other applause but tears, no other testimony but conversions. Jerome a Stupha of the convent of St. Saviour at Florence, used to study his style in hermitages, in woods, and desert places, nor had he any books excepting some fragments of the Scripture; but no one, either learned or unlearned, was ever weary of hearing him, though he sometimes preached for two or three hours, and no church was large enough to contain the multitude that flocked to hear his sermons. In the lent of 1459, he preached in the cathedral, and at the same time Antonio Aretinus, a doctor of Paris, and most illustrious, used to preach in the Sancta Croce with the friars. A friend of the latter expressed his astonishment to him, that the same effects were not produced by his sermons, as by those of friar Jerome. "Those who return from hearing Jerome," said he, "are changed into other men; they appear devout in manner, contrite in heart, with a meditative countenance, not talking to one another, but thinking how they may perform what they have heard, amend their lives, make restitution, and bid adieu to vanities. They who hear you depart joyous and talkative, not seeing how they may correct their ways, but what they may note in you; and like morose censors, they either commend your skill in speaking, or blame what you may have uttered indiscreetly." Aretinus replied as follows: "I will tell you sincerely, nor will I deny my own poverty nor his virtues. What I find in books, I bring forth without fervor, nor do I kindle those flames in myself which I ought to excite in others. I am a coal, but almost extinct. How should I kindle dry wood? but that poor and simple man is all burning, and the sparks of his ardent charity easily kindle to a flame the cold fuel." Shortly after, this learned man, imitating the virtues of Jerome, passed, the Minors, and then, having laid aside the vain flowers of rhetoric, preached not in the words of human wisdom, but in the manifestation of virtue.

\* Rabani Mauri De Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. c. 19.

† Hugo Vict. Eruditionis Theolog. ex Miscel. Lib. IV. tit. 64.

‡ F. B. Ferrarius de veterum Christianorum Concionibus.

§ Journal de Henry IV. 1600. 8 Fev.

When Jerome preached at Milan and at Padua, the doctors and masters ceased their lectures, that the scholars might hear him. "Go," they used to say, "hear the preacher of the best sentences but of the worst rhetoric. Gather the fruit and neglect the leaves." When he first preached at Padua, two of the most celebrated preachers of Italy were then delivering sermons, Alexander a Saxoferrata, an Augustian hermit, and Nicolas Spinelli, a Florentine, but the greatest crowds followed the humble Jerome. The next year, he was chosen in preference to many learned men, to preach on Good Friday, in the church of St. Paul, in presence of the duke and senate, who, after the sermon, followed him with the utmost reverence to his convent.\*

Frequently these preachers availed themselves of accidental interruptions, to throw in impressive words. Thus Herculanus de Piagale, a Minor friar, preaching on the Passion, was interrupted by the lamentations of the weeping multitude. During that solemn pause, a female voice was heard exclaiming from the crowd, "Enough, enough, Herculane, no more weeping." "Yea, but more," he replied, "Christ shed more blood for us than we have tears."†

The academic style was, indeed, excluded by the very circumstances of locality, for it must be remembered that vast as were the churches of the middle ages, it was nevertheless often necessary to preach in the open air to satisfy the multitude of auditors. There was no association of ideas formerly between sermons and velvet cushions. Pope Urban the Second being at Tours, residing at Marmonier, preached on the banks of the Loire. We find St. Francis, on one occasion, preaching on the sea-shore near Cajeta. Again, at the great tournament and game of St. Leo, given by the count of Monte Feltro, it was from a wall that he preached the memorable sermon which moved Count Orlandus Catanus to give him the mountain of Alvernia. Bernardine of Monte Feltro, preaching near Pantanelli, on the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, three thousand persons assembling to hear him from the neighboring towns, in a wood adjoining the Franciscan convent, delivered his sermon from a pulpit formed with the boughs of trees. We find stone pulpits in public squares, and even amidst groves and gardens, from which holy men discoursed to the people. Many of these, like that in the gardens of the abbey of Shrewsbury, are of exquisite beauty. Adam Rufus, a Franciscan in Italy, in 1234, preached in a vast deserted and roofless church; and holy confessors in Ireland, preached during the later times of persecution, amidst the ruined walls of monasteries, on islands in the lakes, and on sea-beaten rocks along the stormy shore. That style was also often excluded by the very character of the men. Ruffinus, the humble and timid disciple of St. Francis, excused himself from preaching, by alleging his simplicity, till he was moved by holy obedience to consent. "Alas!" said he, to himself,

\* Ann. Minorum, tom. XII.

† Ann. Minorum, tom. IV.

"how can I preach, I am deficient in utterance? what can I say? Well, I will repeat a few plain useful words, above all, these, 'put away the evil and do good.'" So, repeating these to himself, he hastened to the spot, and addressed the multitude. "Dearest brethren, fly the world. Sin not, if you would escape the pains of hell: love God above all things, and your neighbor as yourselves. In a word, put away the good and do evil, for the kingdom of God is near." At these transposed words the people began to laugh, but Francis, stepping forth, supplied an admirable correction, which made error become a subtle and profound truth. "Men and brethren," said he, "do you laugh at the words of your Ruffinus, a good and candid man, and do you ridicule his simplicity? Rightly he advised you to put away the good and to do evil. The good which you think of all things best, are human consolations and bodily delights, and these are to be laid aside; but the evil, which is the greatest among worldly men, is to do penance for sins, and to take up the cross daily, and this is the evil which your fellow-citizen desires you to do; he adviseth you to put away carnal delights, to chastise your bodies, and to cease from sin, because the kingdom of God is nigh." At these words the laughter was changed into tears, and in that multitude there was not one whom the words of the man of God did not fill with amaze, and cause to weep abundantly."\*

St. Bernardine of Sienna, in the height of his celebrity used to think that he was only fit to preach in small rustic towns; and, at the end of his sermons in great cities, when the people used to follow him with every expression of honor, he would appear so sad and dejected that one might suppose it was some prisoner that men were leading to execution.† Bernardine of Monte Feltro, who traversed Italy so often in all directions, would always travel on foot, through snow or rain, over rock or marsh. At the town of Trajadi, a sumptuous repast was provided for him after his sermon. He ordered it to be distributed to the poor, and then going without the town, sat down under a tree and made his repast of fruits and bread.

Let it be observed, at the same time, that the negligence and simplicity of the ancient style was such as would have been suggested by art, rather than the result of inability. Raban Maur left admirable rules for the composition of sermons, and showed the necessity of avoiding a foolish and inflated rhetoric. He remarks that those who have most poverty in themselves, are the slowest to take advantage of the rich eloquence of the holy Scriptures; that many things should be delivered in a humble, gentle, and temperate strain, that, above all things, the preacher should use words that are easily understood by the people, and he asks, "Of what use is it to have a golden key, if it cannot open what we want? Or what objection can one have to a wooden key, if it can do this, since we only desire to open what is shut? To the grandest points there should," he observes, "be always a temperate beginning; and it is even in the power of a preacher real-

\* Wadding IV.

† Wadding, tom. X.



ly eloquent, to treat in a humble and moderate style, the very subjects which may be delivered in a grand and magnificent manner, that by means of this dark veil they may be made to appear still more luminous.\* "In preaching, use a simple style," says St. Vincentius, "and a domestic language, to declare particular acts. Use familiar examples, and let all your words seem to come from your mind, not from pride, but rather from the bowels of charity and paternal piety. A general discourse upon virtues and vices moves the hearers but little."†

"As we pity," says Raban Maur, "one that hath a beautiful body with a deformed soul, more than if he had also a deformed body, so when trivial or deformed things are delivered with eloquence, they are more calculated to excite disgust than if they had been spoken in common language."‡ In conformity with this principle the preachers of the middle ages were often Socratic in their style, or even as Alcibiades would say, Silenic. One might sometimes say of them what the disciple remarks of Socrates, that when one hears their discourse, at first they would seem ridiculous, being enveloped in a tissue of such names and words as might be compared to the skin of some insolent satyr; for they speak of asses carrying packsaddles, and kettle-menders, and cobblers, and tanners, and always with the aid of such words they seem to say the same things, so that every inexperienced and foolish man would laugh at their discourses; but when any one shall see them as it were opened, and view their interior, he will be convinced in the first place that their words are full of sense, and afterwards that they are most divine, having many images of virtue within them, and tending to the greatest part, or rather to the whole of what should be the object of contemplation to whoever would be a noble and just man.§ Nevertheless, there is no affectation of negligence discernible in the ancient preachers. St. Chrysostom for the sake of the language is related to have studied Aristophanes. St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, writes to Viventiolus the rhetorician, and says, "I have heard that in the homily which I lately delivered to the people of Lyons, on the dedication of the Basilica, you say that I committed a barbarism, and thus was guilty of a fault in a public discourse. I confess that may have happened, especially to me, for if in greener years I had made any proficiency in the study of letters, 'Omnia fert ætas.' They say that you blame me because I made the middle syllable of *potitur* long, not following Virgil, who made it short, saying *vi potitur*;|| but that is pardonable in a poem, and we find that Virgil, has often so presumed in his works, content to commit a barbarism and to invert the nature of syllables contrary to the laws of art, when necessity requires it. As where he says, '*Non erimus regno indecores*,'¶ or *fervere Leucatem*,"\*\* or that

'*Namque ut supremam falsa intergaudia noctem Egerimus*.'††

\* Rabani Mauri De Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. cap. 35.

† Tract. S. Vincentii de Vita Spirituali cap. de modo prædicandi.

‡ Id. III. 35.

§ Plato Conviv.

|| Æn. III.

¶ VII.

\*\* VIII.

†† Æn. VI.

Virgil used a poetic licence in shortening the middle syllable of *potitur*, which is necessarily long." After some grammatical discussion, he concludes by admonishing this orator to beware in future how he passed such judgments. "*Quod amicum attrahere magis studiis quam detrahere, et oratorem eloqui potius quam obloqui decet.*"\* St. Jerome has remarked that the Arians in ordaining men did not so much require them to be imbued with the sense of the Holy Scriptures, as that they might be able to please the ears of the people with the flowers of declamation. "Hence it was," he said, "that the Arian heresy employed more the wisdom of the world."†

St. Gregory Nazianzen severely condemned those preachers who transferred the eloquence and pronunciation of the theatre to the chair of evangelical truth.‡ If, on the one hand, laymen during the middle ages knew that it was a grievous fault to criticise a preacher, on the other the clergy when discourse was held, did not stand forth before them as players, delivering artful declamation with the tone and action of tragedians: they were empassioned, earnest and eloquent, but it was a passion totally removed from all effeminate desire to draw tears, an earnestness which was not noisy and affected; an eloquence which had nothing in common with the tricks of a scenic representation. The awful severity of truth little accorded with unmanly fondness for dwelling on the detail of human sufferings, and what was bad taste in a poet like Euripides, would have sounded like profanation from the lips of one who was to announce the doctrines of the cross and the fact of the eternal existence. It is clear, too, that the preachers of these times addressed themselves to the understanding and passions, but not merely to the ears of men: for their sermons lose nothing by being read, and that also after a lapse of eight hundred years. The effect was produced by words full of sense, not by a prolongation of sounds which so far from moving the passions religiously of an intellectual audience, would wound and exasperate them. Dante, indeed, blames the unwarranted conceits of some preachers of his time in Florence, who were addicted to vulgar familiarity, and the desire of jests and gibes; but even when accusing these of neglecting the book of God, he speaks of the favor which he wins for himself who meekly clings to it.

The holy fathers, sometimes, though indeed most rarely, adopted a light and facetious style in exposing the errors of the heathen superstitions; as when St. Augustin says, "In the plague they must bring *Æsculapius* from *Epidaurus* to help Rome, since *Jove*, the king of all, who had been seated for a long time in the capitol, having spent his youth in licentious pleasures, had, perhaps, never leisure to study medicine."§ The pleasantry or familiarity of the preachers of the middle age was at all events better than empty declamation and the affected intonation of words signifying nothing. It had even an ardor of philosophy about it, as may be witnessed in the sermons of brother John of Rochetaillée, a

\* Epist. 41.

† Adv. Lucifer.

‡ Orat. XXVII.

§ De Civ. Dei. III. 17.

learned and holy friar of the fourteenth century, whose pleasant apologues reminded proud and worldly ecclesiastics that God was the best possession.\*

Bernardine of Monte Feltro, who used to say pleasantly that he was of the illustrious house of Piccolomini, alluding to his stature, which obtained for him the surname of *Parvulus*, introduced the same idea into the affecting sermon which he preached on entering Pavia, where foretelling his own death, and apostrophizing himself, he said, "A great sea is shortly to be passed, deeper for those to whom the care of others has been committed, and how much more then for me who am so little? but I will keep near the shore." But what is most of all striking in the sermons of the middle age is their mild and persuasive tone, that artless sweetness, which no affectation could attain to, and which can hardly fail even at this distance and under circumstances of society so changed from the time when they were first delivered, to act with religious power on the hearts of all who hear them. In them breathes the gentle spirit of moving words. "Testor Jesum," cries the monk John, speaking of his master St. Odo II., abbot of Cluni, and of his instructions, "Testor Jesum, quia ex ore hominis numquam audiui tantam dulcedinem sermonis."† Seldom do these orators aspire to cast forth lightning and thunder like Pericles, but they generally announce their majestic lessons and develop their innocent thoughts in that meek and soothing style which reminds one of Cicero's expressions, when he said that his eloquence began *canescere*. It was not what Quintillian calls "*circulatoriam volubilitatem*;" it was a style sober but splendid, and full of majesty; condensed and abounding in sense as in the opening lines of Lewis of Grenada's sinner's guide, which never grovels, but pursues its even way, never beats the air, but like an oracular voice impresses the ear with reverence: nothing graver, more prudent, more simple, more studious of truth and virtue: soft and full of refreshing lustre, like the dew of heaven, these chaste and holy thoughts descended into the very deepest recesses of the human heart. True, they were humble, and often unlearned men, but they were imbued with the science of the sacred Scriptures; they knew the psalms, they knew sentences of the fathers, they knew decrees of the Church, they knew traditions of wisdom, they knew secrets of grace, they knew the lives, they knew the death of the just. If they were not orators, after the manner of Greece and Rome, their high conception soared beyond the mark of mortals; if at times they added things so profound that we cannot follow them, when the flight of holy transport had so spent its rage that nearer to the level of our thought the speech descended, the sounds that issued were of justice and mercy, words like those of angels worthy of sacred silence to be heard.

Their discourse, as Bernardine of Sienna requires, was vivifying to the dead, illuminative to the blind, inflammatory to the frigid, nutritive to the hungry, defensive to the tempted; it softened the obdurate, it consoled the despairing heart.

\* Paradin. Hist. de Lyon., Lib. II. 86.

† Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 21.



There arose from it purity to the defiled, health to the diseased, strength to the weak, and glory to those who sought salvation. It is not derogatory to the almighty grace, nor injurious to the divine word, to acknowledge that when excited even by the natural love of truth and justice, the tongue of man can play upon the heart with wondrous skill, and draw from it tones of ineffable sweetness. Might not one suppose that the young Athenian in Plato was describing a saint Eligius or Edmund, or holy preacher of living justice, when speaking of his master, he says, "Truly, when we hear any other orator, however admirable, delivering other discourses, it may be said in a word that we take no interest in him ; but when any one hears you, or hears some other person repeating your words, however mean that person may be, whether it be a woman or a man, or a youth who hears them, we are struck, and as it were led captive. Sooth, as for myself, whenever I hear him my heart leaps more than that of the Corybantes, and my tears burst forth by the force of his words ; and I see many others who are affected in the same way ; but after hearing Pericles and other great orators, I am indeed of opinion that they speak well ; but I am never moved in this way, neither is my soul troubled nor affected with pain as if enslaved ; but by this man I am thus affected, and that to such a degree that I am forced to believe that to be as I am is not to be ; I know also perfectly that if ever I lend my ears to him I shall be unable to resist, but must suffer these things ; for he compels me to confess that wanting much I still neglect myself while I attend to the affairs of the Athenians. Therefore do I fly from him, stopping my ears, as if from the syrens, that I may not grow old in attending to him. And, moreover, it is only in his presence that I am susceptible of shame ; for I know well that I shall not be able to persuade myself but that I ought to do what he desires me ; but yet when I go away I am subdued through respect to the multitude. Therefore I run away from him and I avoid him, and whenever I see him I feel ashamed, and oftentimes I would that he were no longer living among men ; though if this were to happen I know well that I should grieve still more, so that I do not know how to act with regard to this man."\*

From many passages in the writings of Plato, it is easy to gain some insight into mysteries concerning the instructions and influence of Christian teachers. If the voice of natural justice could work so upon the feelings of a generous youth, what must be the impressions produced by the announcement of the everlasting Gospel ? "I myself," says an ancient author, "was a witness of a preacher whose writings sufficiently evince the fervor of his zeal, who for the purpose of preaching during the five or six years that he preached in Italy, never studied in any other book but that of the passion of Jesus Christ. Seven years past, when I was in a convent of our order named Fonte-Palombe, forty miles from Rome, this venerable and devout man, on the night of the stigmata of St. Francis, was sought

\* Plato Conviv.

for in a grotto which was within the enclosures of the convent, that he might come and preach before the brethren, who were waiting in the church after matins. Freely the sage, though wrapped in musings high, assumed the teacher's part, and mild began. Then without having made any preparation, excepting what he had in his solitary communion with God, he spake such high things with such an extraordinary fervor, that I felt quite out of myself. In truth, being in the number of thirty monks, there was not one who did not shed hot tears. And now whence had he this which he delivered, performing as he did this divine action without any premeditation? He gained it all at the foot of the cross of our adorable Jesus, whose sacred name he pronounced every moment with a sweetness that passed all human utterance."\* Certainly, a preacher of this description is a right wondrous thing. In all other arts, as Novalis observes of the poet, one can perceive how the effect is produced ; we can trace the operations of the painter and the musician, but this is something hidden and unsearchable. It is an art wholly immaterial and internal, while inspiring the mind with new, admirable, and transporting thoughts. We hear strange words and yet know what they signify. A magic power is on the tongue of him who addresses us, and even the commonest and most familiar words come forth from his lips with a fascinating and impressive sound, which retains as with a spell the fast-bound hearer.

A Christian who had come from the school of Plato, would observe that it is not by any art such men are able to illustrate their subject, but that it is by a divine power which moves them as in the magnet, for that stone not only draws iron rings, but also imparts a power to those rings by which they can produce the same effect as the stone itself to draw other rings, so that sometimes there is a long concatenation of iron and rings all depending upon each other, while the power which connects them all together is derived from that stone ; in like manner religion or the muse infuses into them a divine power, by means of which they can impart their enthusiasm to others. St. Gregory even says that there are many things in the sacred page which when alone he cannot understand, but which when placed before his brethren, he has understood ; † for it is with these teachers and the souls of men, as with the rings depending upon the loadstone. It is God who draws human souls through all these, whithersoever he wishes, while they hang depending upon each other, and hence men who in every thing else may remain rude and unskilful can perform this ; for they excel not by art, but by a divine power, which accounts for their remaining so deficient in other things ; for to this end are such men used by God as his ministers, that we hearing them may know that it is not they who utter these things, to whom there is no great power of intelligence, but that it is God who speaks and announces his will through them to the human race. All this is implied in the conclusion of the memorable sermon of St. Ambrose, in which he expresses his joy on the

\* Le Sacré Mont d'Olivet, 682.

† Hom. in Ezek. ii. 7.

baptism of St. Augustin, whose conversion promised such utility to the Church. After describing his great talents and acquirements, and how he had clothed him in a black cowl, and with his own hands tied round him a leathern girdle, he is so far from imagining that this conversion reflects glory on himself, that he declares publicly that in previous conversations with this great philosopher he used to be pressed by him with such vehemence of dispute that he was obliged in his prayers to God to beg that he might be preserved from his seductions. "*Quis expugnavit enim?*" he exclaims in conclusion, "*quis superavit? Non argumenta, non vis aliqua verborum, sed Dei duntaxat virtus et clementia.*"\*

The instructions of the clergy of the middle ages are extremely interesting in an historical point of view, as reflecting light upon the manners and general spirit of society during that interval; for from the kind of imagery used in illustration, and from the particular motives employed to inculcate justice, we may learn many remarkable features which distinguished the generations to which they were addressed. The sacred Scriptures and traditions show that the Creator is pleased to accommodate his voice to the pursuits and circumstances of men, as when to the Chaldeans, who learned wisdom not in books but in observing the sky, he sent a star. Magdalen is drawn by her tenderness and love, David by his just and generous heart, Xavier by his vast and noble sentiments and desires, Ignatius by his passion for chivalrous loyalty to an earthly king. To Hubert, the lover of hunting, who follows the chase through the immensity of the Ardenes, is given the apparition of a miraculous stag, and others are similarly excited by movements congenial to their habits and dispositions. In accordance with this divine economy, which is termed by the school congruity of grace, we find that the commissioned teachers who in different ages announced the will of Almighty God, have always availed themselves of the predominant affections and disposition of the men whom they instructed, in order more effectually to obtain their assent. Moreover, their descriptions of sacred events are often, for the same reason, mere stamps or reflections of contemporary society. For this power of anachronism is of great importance in conducting minds which are submerged in the manners of their time, which are ready to receive with simplicity and great historic traditions, provided they are clothed in the mantle which they wear themselves. It would be a curious exercise to pursue this inquiry in reference to the modern compositions. Even the spiritual writers of the present day are obliged to borrow comparisons from ignoble pursuits, and to employ motives sometimes which require not a little ingenuity in the orator to be rendered reconcilable with the grandeur and sanctity of the Christian law. Many words of daily use repeated from the pulpit, agree strangely with the evangelic context, and even from the imagery and motives employed in the exhortations which are addressed to our age, posterity will have no difficulty in determining by what name it may be distinguish-

\* Serm. XCII.



ed. Similarly from the orations of Bossuet, and even from the pages of Malebranche, it is easy to discover that the predominant passions and tastes of the men to whom they were addressed, were not of an heroic or natural character.

Now on taking up the sermons of the middle age, we feel as if in a different world, and no longer with men callous save to crime and egotism. It is the contrast between guiding a generous steed with silken thread, and having to lash a wretched hackney, whose only spirit is in vice—a coarse, swollen animal, without mettle and without shame. When the guides of the middle age, as in the work of Christine de Pisan, composed of extracts from the Scripture and the holy fathers, and the ancient philosophers and poets, say that human life may be strictly called chivalry, every man, as man, having to combat vices, and as a Christian to resist the assaults of the enemy from hell,—when St. Francis calls brother Gilles one of his knights of the round table, when St. Bernard, repeating the seven penitential psalms without distraction, is compared by brother Gilles to a castle vigorously attacked, and courageously defended, when St. Theresa entitles one of her sublime books “the Castle of the Soul,” we may easily infer what were in these times the circumstances of society, and the particular character of the age. From the sermon of Robert de Sorbonne, on conscience, historians can learn what were the customs and rules of the university of Paris in his time, in regard to scholastic exercises and examinations; for they are in the most minute detail employed as images to illustrate the day of God’s eternal judgment. In like manner, one can ascertain the prevailing character of men by observing the peculiar motives urged upon them by the clergy. Remark the mode of persuasion adopted by father John de Avila, “Since you are a gentleman and a valorous knight,” he says to one of his correspondents, “combat virtuously, and under no false colors, which of all things a Christian ought most to hate; and since you love simplicity, be in fact what you are in name and appearance. How will you be able to answer in the day of visitation, if you live thus now in the world? How can you suppose that your Lord will acknowledge you as his knight and champion, since you have always fought in the camp of his enemies? Do you expect a recompense from Him whom you have never served?”\*

Again, he says, “It is no small honor to a knight when his king places him in the post of danger. The knights and noblemen hold that for a high grace, as a mark of the king’s confidence in them; and so should the Christian regard the perils and sufferings of his course.”† The sermons of Thomas à Kempis furnish similar indications of the spirit of his age. “The world,” he says, “praises its lovers, brave knights and barons, because they fight for their country, and expose themselves to many dangers, and manfully to death, and prefer the common to all private and selfish good. How much more is Christ to be praised and to be loved who was crucified and slain for us all that we might live for ever and reign with him

\* Epist. XLIII.

† Epist. XXXIV. Pars. 2.

in heaven.”\* You perceive what were the motives that sunk the scale with men of these times, the wings by which their souls were raised aloft, and made the guests of heaven. The clergy of the middle ages have been condemned for preaching with great vehemence against customs, which were in themselves trivial or indifferent. In the eleventh century, they opposed themselves to the extravagant fashion of men wearing long hair like women, floating down their shoulders. Robert, count of Flanders, who had distinguished himself at the siege of Jerusalem, having gone to St. Omer, to celebrate the festival of Christmas, a number of prelates and lords repaired there. The holy Godefroi, bishop of Amiens, was of the number, and the court begged him to sing the mass of midnight, which he did. But when the lords came to the offering, a similar scene occurred as that which took place at Cremona, which was observed in the last book ; for the bishop would not admit any one who wore this long hair. The courtiers began to murmur, and to ask who was this bishop that assumed such authority in a strange diocese ? Learning that it was Godefroi, so renowned for his extraordinary piety, they resolved to sacrifice the vain ornament of their hair rather than deprive themselves of the benediction of such a holy bishop. Immediately they began to cut off their hair, some with their knives, and others even with their swords.†

Men ridicule the preachers and moralists of the middle ages, for laying such stress upon peculiar fashions of dress, and for opposing certain novelties with such vehemence, yet St. Clemens Alexandrinus who saw the old civilization, does not think it unfitting to occupy several pages of his philosophic treatises with similar disquisitions ; and against embroidered sandals, Attic and Sicyonian shoes and Persian buskins, he declaims with as much energy as any monk ever evinced in combating the shoes with long points.‡ The fact is, that even in what relates to the clothing of the body, men can be unjust, and therefore to condemn the zeal of ecclesiastics in combating particular innovations, without knowing on what grounds they oppose them, is both rash and unphilosophical.§ Every kind of absurd refinement or barbarism has been from age to age combated by the clergy, who were the guardians of good taste as well as of religion and morals. Was it ridiculous to oppose the introduction of an effeminate costume, which of itself might have softened the character of a whole people ? or to abolish indecent ceremonies at weddings, or the fashion of daubing the face with red or white paint ?|| The statutes of the city of Verona record, that at the persuasion of St. Bernardine of Siena, the games which used to be celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, were transferred to the Thursday before Quinquagesima ; and at Perugia, where many yearly lost their lives at certain tournaments, he prevailed on the magistrates to ordain that only blunted and inoffensive weapons should be used in the conflict.

\* Serm. III. Pars 2.

† Recherches Hist. sur le Diocese de Séz p, 257.

‡ Stromat. Lib. II. c. 11.

§ Drexelius de Culto Corporis.

|| Maillard Sermones in die Santi Joannis Baptistæ.

So also Bernardine Feltrensis persuaded the magistrates of Verona to put off to a less solemn day, a grand tournament which had been prepared for the festival of St. John the Baptist, and which the people were eagerly expecting. Did not such interference serve the cause of humanity and of religion, by keeping it pure from an association with passions of a doubtful character?

Upon the whole, the preaching of the clergy, during the middle ages, as well as every other mode of extending their influence, was worthy of the ages of faith, in regard to the thirst and fulfilment of justice. Even considered merely as philosophic discussions, their sermons are entitled to all possible attention. They furnish proof that the ecclesiastical superiors of those days, with all their solicitude for the sacred deposit of faith, and all their reverence for antiquity, were not afraid of genius in the pulpit. No doubt to persons who only read them, there appears to be much repetition and unnecessary development; but it should be remembered, that they were addressed to different persons in succession, and that it entered not into the imagination of those who heard them to desire novelty. "Let us not be weary of repeating the same things, since we speak to new hearers," says St. Augustin. Does it not often happen that when we show to persons who have never before seen them, certain spacious and beautiful places, either in cities, or in the country, which from long habit of seeing we ourselves pass by without any pleasure, we find our delight revived in the pleasure which novelty inspires in them? and in proportion as they are more bound to us by the chain of love, these things that had been old and familiar became new to us. How much more then ought we to be delighted when we approach to learn respecting God, on account of whom all things whatever that are to be said are said; so that our preaching, which had become frigid from being often heard, should be renovated by the impression of novelty upon them, and should grow fervent in consequence of their not being accustomed to hear it?"\*

In regard not only to the traditions of the early church, but also to all the old and precious virtues of humanity, the desire of the clergy was that of the great Mantuan—

"Ferre per antiquos patrum vestigia gressus,  
Et veteres servare vias, revocare vagantes  
Per valles et saxa greges, per lustra ferarum  
Figere in antiquis iterum magalia campis."

That the people were to be fed with the plain and vivifying food of apostolic doctrine, and not with the empty and unintelligible sounds of a vain philosophy, was proclaimed even by the material monuments of the middle age; for on the pulpit supported by eight columns, which bishop Tustin in the year 1180 placed in the cathedral of Mazara, in Sicily, might be read this inscription. "Prædica evangelium meum universæ creaturæ. Ad cælum via non fuerat Babylonica turris."†

S. August. de catechizandis rudibus:

† Sicilia Sacra. tom. II. 845.



But what matter could be found more abundant for a grave and copious discourse than the high themes of eternal providence, and the stupendous mysteries of human redemption? The great rhetorical masters of antiquity esteemed that they had chosen the grandest subjects, when they treated on virtue, on providence, on the origin of souls, on friendship. "These are things," adds Quintilian, "by means of which both the mind and the language are elevated, when we show what things are truly good, what mitigates fear, restrains cupidity. When we learn to despise the opinions of the vulgar, and to believe that the mind is celestial," all which certainly acquire an infinite exaltation, and wholly a divine character, as we find them in the Catholic doctors, whose discourses might dispense men from ever consulting the worthies whom he opposes to the world, the Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, and Mutii. What other men will be able to speak like the Gregories, the Bernards, the Anselms, the Bedes, the Fencelons, the Challoners, on fortitude, on justice, faith, continence, frugality, contempt, of pain and death? And to what class of mankind, or to what regions did not their divine instructions extend? Through their lips did their Creator send his word to the earth, and it ran swiftly; he sent forth his voice and he melted the congealed hearts; at the breathing of his Spirit the waters flowed. No longer exclusively were Jacob and Israel to be satiated, but to every nation did he send the living streams of the true life, and manifest his justice and his judgments.

---

## CHAPTER VI.



Of the morality of the ages of faith, and to that of the middle ages in particular, there belonged many remarkable characteristics which cannot be mistaken or overlooked by any one who studies history with attention and fidelity. In the first place, according to the distinction of Nicholas de Lyra, it was heroic, which was to say much in brief. Principles, thoughts and deeds bore that stamp. Proof of this may be found in every work which transmits to us a knowledge of those times, not excluding even the testimonies of poets and painters, for they did but copy what they beheld around them when they imparted to those whom they represented that external dignity and grandeur which was only produced by the greatness of the heart within. What senatorial majesty in Titian's countenances! What a divine serenity in Godfrey of Bouillon, as described by Tasso—

"His face and forehead full of noblesse were  
And on his cheek smiled youth's purple beams;

And in his gait, his grace, his acts, his eyes,  
Somewhat far more than mortal lives and lies.”\*

As Spenser says,

“All good and honor might therein be read,  
For there their dwelling was.”

This proclaimed the presence of that heroic and divine virtue which Homer, in whose mind its ideal passed, makes Priam ascribe to Hector, saying that he was greatly good—

——— οὐδὲ ξῶκει  
Ἀνδρός γε θνητοῦ πᾶσις ἔμμεναι, ἀλλὰ θεοῖο.

In fact, the beatitudes to which the Catholic manners were wholly directed, involve of necessity actions eminently heroic, as St. Bernardine of Sienna remarks, accepting even the exact Homeric distinction of excellently good.† “The virtue of justice in man,” saith he, “is twofold, common or political, by which he renders to others what is reasonably due; and excellent, attended with hunger and thirst, when he pays the debt of justice with a fervent desire, and speculates to work it with subtlety.”‡ Instances of this subtle speculation to act justly, producing no doubt extraordinary effects—for spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues—are the occasion of many sublime and wondrous episodes in the history of the middle ages, but such as are completely unintelligible to the moderns, to whom they appear precisely the most striking evidence that the annals of mankind furnish of barbarism and ignorance. Not penetrating to the tender, profound and subtle motive of those they read about, they deride the vest of Dominicus Loricatus, and express pity for Jacoponus, whom they think really and for the first time mad, when he showed himself like the savage from the woods. The pages of Christian history are to them like those fragments of maps and pictures which seem so many separate monsters to children, till one gives them a clue by which they can put together and form from them an harmonious whole.

Now, reader, mark my words, and judge whether it were not the prevalence of this spirit which rendered history so favorite a pursuit in the Catholic society of the middle ages. We are told that even down to the present day every city of Spain has its particular chronicle; and Muratori says, that “there is scarcely any city of name in Italy, which cannot show at least one or more ancient writers of its history, while at the same time it remembers and deplores having lost others.§ It was the same in other countries previous to the dissolution of the ancient social state, by the influence of the new philosophy, which struck at the roots of history, by taking away from the manners of men heroism and admiration, and by reducing every thing to calculation and selfishness. When John of Bruges heard George Cœlius mention his having found in the library of the monastery of Alcoba a manuscript in which were writings of St. Isidore and St. Alfonso,

\* XX. 7. † Tom. III. s. IV. ‡ Tom. II. de Beatit. § In Script. rer. Ital. Præfat.

de viris illustribus,—he could not rest until he had it in his hands. Having devoured it with eyes and soul, he says, “I found all things greater than I had ever expected; so that I was impelled to the resolution of applying seriously to the writing of history.”\* “Heavens!” he exclaims, “how rich I found Spain in all arts! What an indefatigable fervor for vindicating the Christian religion! What proofs of all virtues! How many examples of all memorable things!”† In like manner of every people during the ages of faith, it was a lively joy to search into annals which recounted the former deeds. “What magnanimous spirits in the barbarism of the middle age!” cries Silvio Pellico. “What martyrs to truth! what benefactors to the afflicted! What fathers of the church, admirable by their colossal philosophy, and by their ardent charity. What valiant heroes, defenders of justice! what communicators of light, wise poets, wise naturalists, wise artists!”‡

Even at the very moment of greatest enthusiasm for classical studies in Italy, there were learned men and philosophers who were too acute to speak except ironically of the barbarism of the middle ages. Benedict Aretino says, that whoever would diligently read these books of Leonardo Aretino on the deeds of the Florentines, in which he relates the whole history of Italy during a long interval, would be convinced that they had nothing to fear from a comparison with antiquity. “What cities of old,” he asks, “were ever comparable in true greatness to the republics of Florence and Venice, in which the worship of Almighty God was celebrated with such care and devotion, and magnificence? Doth it not shame you,” he adds, “to have affirmed that there were no great citizens in these latter ages, when you are constrained to behold such immortal monuments of men endowed with the highest prudence, charity, subtilty, religion, temperance, and magnanimity? the enumeration of whom, even in our age, must be renounced, their number being almost infinite, yet of whose heroic virtue we can judge from witnessing only a few such as Bartholomeo Valorio, Nicholas Uzano, and Guido Thomasi, men truly wise, religious, and just; who with John of Medicis, Gino of Caponi, Miglore Gradagno, Dino Ughucci, Petro Baroncelli, Bartholomeo Corbinelli, Francis Federigo, Uguccio Ricci, Lupus Castilione, Philip Corsini, and Charles Strozza, were illustrious citizens worthy of eternal honor, whom we see succeeded by others now living, of similar manners, none of whom I ought to name unless Cosmo of Medicis, son of John, of whom it would be affectation not to speak, who was in youth of such modesty and continence, and who in mature age shows such wisdom and justice; whom the whole population loves as the mildest and most humane of the human race.§

From that series of holy and illustrious men whom Padua produced, what sublime episodes might be furnished to the muse! Time would fail me, were I to

\* Joan. Vasæi Brugensis Rer. Hispanicarum Chronic. cap. I.

† Id.

‡ Dei doveri degli uomini, c. 7.

§ De Præstantia Virorum sui ævi Dialogus.



speak of those great counts Manfred and Raimerio, Schinello and Albert of Baone, or the nobles of the house of Carrara. To ennoble that city, would have sufficed the single family of Campisamperio, which derived its name from the first of its Tiso's of whom it boasts four,—that illustrious general and duke of Padua, who, moved at the sermons of blessed Antony, abdicated all the honors of the world, and retired to the town of Campo San Pietro, near which, in the branches of a walnut-tree, he constructed a lodge, and thence from a pulpit, preached Jesus Christ to the people; and which subsequently produced that other Tiso, surnamed the Great, who delivered his country from the tyrannous yoke of Eccelino.\*

How clearly might men have discerned the admirable influence of Catholic principles of the heroic character, in the conduct of the great counts of St. Boniface at Verona, of that illustrious house, one of the most ancient in Italy, which derived its splendor from the favor of many sovereign pontiffs, just and religious men, who as Guelphs defended the church, as well as the freedom and dearest interests of the people?† Above all, witness Venice, and her dukes and senators. How inspiring to see them pass before us as they are cited by Crassus, and to hear of Dandolo, who in justice, innocence, and learning, was what others wish to seem, of Andrew Contarino, unconquerable in magnanimity, who evinced through life a sincerity and moderation that were beyond all praise, of Francis Donatus, whose grave and venerable aspect is so well represented by Titian, eminent for civil prudence and justice, of Leonardo Lauretano, that true lover of his country and of virtue incorruptible, of Nicolas Marcellus, a man of innocence and spotless honor, than whom no one was ever chaster as a youth, more just as a man of mature years, or more eloquent or wise in old age, so that the whole state admired and venerated him, learned without ostentation, who knew how to possess the highest grandeur with the deepest humility, of Nicholas Ponte, the true philosopher, not more eminent for learning than for faith and virtue, who at the Council of Trent evinced such knowledge of the Christian mysteries, that he merited praise from the fathers of every nation, of Pascalis Ciconea, uniting the rare qualities of a great prince, with innocence and sanctity, and charity, who lived holily and justly, in peace and war, of Peter and John Mocenici, brothers, liberal, just, brave, and pacific, of the invincible Sebastian Venarius, who seemed raised up for the liberty of his country, and the defence of the Christian name, frugal, holy, and just, who presided at the consecration of the votive church of Christ the Redeemer, on the liberation of Venice from the pestilence, of Antonio Quirino, the accomplished senator, of Bernardo Justiniani, so admirable for wisdom and erudition, that in his old age and blindness, the senators would adopt no measure without consulting him, of Frederick Valarezso, equally eminent in the senate and in the schools of Francis Barotius, so profound in the-

\* Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. tom. VI. Chronic. Rolandini, cap. 7.

† Torelli Saraynæ Hist. et Gesta Veronensium, Lib. 1. Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, IX.

ology and knowledge of the Christian fathers, of John Basadonna, amongst the just and innocent for ever enrolled, glorious in letters, and renowned as a senator of the republic, of Paul Paruta, who passed with such honor through all high offices, and yet left to posterity so many monuments of his erudition, of those heroic commanders Augustus Barbadico, Benedict and Jerome Pisauri, men of almost incredible sanctity of life, of Charles Zeno, whom the Venetians compare with the noblest captains of antiquity, of Francis Barbarus, uniting the splendor of all virtues to the senatorial purple, of James Fuscarenò, whose private and public life were equally admirable, of Antonio Bragadeno, whom historians know not whether to rank among heroes or among saints and martyrs, of Petro Prioli, wise, eloquent, brave, and holy, of Vincent Maurocenus, alike under the robe and under the cuirass, admirable for devotion, justice, and humanity, of Benedict Eritius, who retained such purity of manners from youth to great old age, removed from all contention and vanity, never breaking silence excepting when moved by zeal for justice, of James Æmilianus, whose innocence and probity no orator could worthily celebrate, of Petre Sanutus, who united profound skill and prudence with the simplicity of a youth, and who was never known to utter a word that might not have been addressed to cloistered nuns, of Vincent Gradonicus, who seemed so richly to merit the felicity which followed him through life, of Marinus Georgius, who at his own expense built the church of St. Dominic, and died in odor of sanctity, of John Cornelius, who through love of justice would not spare his own son when obnoxious to the laws, of Marc Antonio Trevisano, who gave all his goods to the poor, and was called to a better life while assisting at mass in the church of St. Francis ad Vineam, of Vitus Caotorta, whose breast was a sanctuary, so that his countenance alone was enough to disarm the most ferocious, and convert cruelty into reverence and peace. Magnificent procession of heroic men, who seem to have reconciled two things of most difficult combination, reaping at the same time human glory and divine beatitude.\*

A modern and illustrious historian remarks, "the prodigiously audacious sentiment of the moral power and grandeur of man, which was manifested generally in the twelfth century."† He might well be struck, for throughout that whole history he had seen multitudes in every rank and order of life, ready at all times to join their invincible might to do worthy and godlike deeds. Indeed, wherever the heroic spirit existed, it was not one but every kind of virtue which might be expected, for all wickedness is weakness, as Clemens Alexandrinus remarks: "Of the thousand sins which men commit, there are but two causes, the roots of every sin being weakness and folly, neither wishing to command passion nor to learn what is right."‡ Now this heroism was inseparable from the piety of the middle ages, for religion is its source, as is remarked by John Picus of

\* Nic. Crassi *Elogia Patriciorum Venet.* Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, tom. V.

† Michélet, *Hist. de France*, II. 393.

‡ Stromat. Lib. VII. 16.

Mirandula, in writing to a friend whom he invites to become his companion in studies, to whom he says, "You will see that with me there is nothing of more importance than that I should join piety with wisdom. A multitudinous course of discipline, and whatever letters can promise, may color the skin, and render the face fairer as if with paint, but we cannot hope for a sound, firm, and robust mind from any other source besides integrity of life and divine religion."\* Accordingly, this character in the first place belonged in an eminent degree to the justice of the martyrs, whom, as St. Augustin says, "if the ecclesiastical custom of speech permitted, we shoul call our heroes."†

In fact, history in the middle ages adopted as such, those whom the Church hath canonized, and rightly, for how can an historian omit mention of those men whom God hath given to the world, by the example of whom so many were delivered from it and saved? Lucius Marineus, the Sicilian, dedicates one part of his chronicle to speak expressly of the saints of Spain: Vincent, Laurence, Illefonso, Leocadia, Eulalia, Florentina, Turibio, Victor, Lauriano, Fulgentio, Ferdinand, Valerian, Emetherius and Cheledonius, Zoylo, John, Faustus, Januarius, Torquatus, Lambert, Æmilian, Juliano, Casilla, Isidore, Antonio, Dominic, and numerous others.‡

The charm which such lives throw upon history in general, is remarked by Chateaubriand, who says, that it is very easy to make from them passages full of simplicity, poesy, and interest. "I am aware that the very multitude of these Christian heroes has been made a ground of objection by the moderns, who seem to think that it is sufficient cause to omit mention of any person as historic, because the Church has enrolled him in the number of the saints. True the multitude of canonized saints was great, but the church had not the policy of the ancient Romans, who, as Cicero remarks, did not give out that Tullius Hostilius, struck by lightning, was received into the number of the gods like Romulus, by that kind of death, lest this honor should become vile and vulgar, by being so soon after attributed to another. What a multitude of saints! True, but judge them with the penetrating eyes of a St. Augustine, when he reviews the lives of the Gentile heroes, and then say whether history hath not a right to claim them as its brightest ornaments, proving the accuracy of St. Augustin's remark, that true justice is only to be found in that republic of which the founder and ruler is Christ."§ Considering them even without the effulgent circlet, say what act of theirs wanted the stamp of incorruptible justice, of heroic virtue? Not confined, however, to the witness of truth, heroism belonged to the general morality of the middle ages.

Many characteristics of the ancient Christian society, as of that of Spain before the French philosophy had entered, according to the report of Huber, may be explained in two words, neither of them, as he says, Spanish or German, and

\* Joan. Picus Mirandula, Epist. Lib. I. 33.

† De rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. V.

‡ De Civit. Dei, Lib. X. 21.

§ De Civit. Dei, II. 91.



certainly neither of them discoverable in the language of any people during times of Catholic civilization. Men were not disenchanted, as the French say, nor sophisticated, according to the expression of Shakespeare, who beheld the gathering mists of the new philosophy. There was a freshness and a vigor diffused throughout the social state, and heroism was evinced in every profession and walk of life.

In our times, we hear of youths being educated for the particular ranks to which they are destined, and carefully prevented from receiving any instruction, or acquiring any disposition or taste that might inspire them with views above the condition in which it is thought most probable that they will amass the greatest wealth. Of this kind of prudence no trace whatever is found in the Catholic society of the middle ages. "Though this book," says Giles of Colonna, "is entitled '*De regimine Principum*,' yet the whole people can be instructed by it; for though every one cannot be a king or prince, every one ought to endeavor to become such as to be worthy of being a king or prince."\* Examine the models that used to be proposed in the different states and professions. The blessed doctor proposes the manners of youth according to Aristotle, as those which as far as respects liberality, hope, magnanimity, benevolence, mercy, and modesty, become kings and all men.† Witness the treatise of Charles Paschal, on the duties of an ambassador, and mark how noble fortitude and heroic greatness of mind were then deemed essential in the diplomatic life. Witness the anatomy of a juris-consult by Marsilius Ficinus, who represents the worship of God and the love of his country as the chief organs in that composition; and observe his words to Peter Phillippo, "I need not paint the ideal, for you have the reality in Francis Soderino your disciple, in whose manners, as in a mirror, you can behold yourself."‡ The commerce, too, of those times was that great profession which Cicero declares is not to be despised,§ and which Plutarch says was formerly glorious, when merchants were the friends of kings, and the founders of great states.|| John Bonvisia, of Lucca, in the fifteenth century, when a young merchant, pursuing his affairs in Spain, though crowned with such success that the fortunes of his family became greatly augmented, yet obtained from the generosity of his character the friendship of princes, and became the familiar companion of courtly nobles, till the intense thirst of the heavenly life, which had actuated him from a boy, induced him to renounce the world and assume the habit of a Minor, clad in which, after three years, he returned to his country.¶

Open the annals of Genoa, and mark the character of their merchants. See those brothers, Jerome and Sinibald Flisca, of immense wealth, yet than whom are no men more humble or courteous, of sweeter manners, or more remote from all ambition, studious of every beautiful art, delighting in the company of learned

\* P. 1. Lib. I. c. 1.

|| In Solon.

† Id. IV. I. 1

¶ Annal. Minorum, tom. XIV.

‡ Epist. Lib. I.

§ Lib. I. de Off.

men, and rewarding them with liberality. Behold that Adam Centurio, in whose prudence and genius Andrew Doria so much confided, a man of the utmost gravity, abhorring all titles of honor; and that Nicholas Grimaldi, not more conspicuous for his riches, which were immense, than for his munificence and charity, assisting and supporting so many unfortunate citizens, secretly raising up so many that were fallen and adorning the city with edifices of royal munificence.\* We cannot wait to see all pass. Let us only look once more, and behold Francis Vinaldus, who surpassed all the Genoese that ever were in wealth, yet whose moderation in all things was such, that his immense riches never caused the least injury to any one, or proved offensive to any mortal eyes. His houses were neither sordid, nor such as could attract envy; his tables were always frugal, his manners abstemious, his servants few in number; and with such innocence did he persevere in this simple tenor of life, that he arrived at extreme old age without ever having had an enemy. But lest this moderation should be ascribed to avarice, let it be remembered that this was the Francis who gave that enormous sum to his country, by means of which the public debt was yearly diminished.† “The noble mercantile spirit,” as Novalis observes, “the genuine merchant character never flourished excepting in the middle ages. The Medicis, the Fuggers, were merchants in the true sense of the term. Our merchants in general,” he adds, “the greatest not excepted, are nothing but shop-keepers.”‡

In the ages of faith we can trace the same noble spirit descending into the last mechanic's veins. Witness what is related by Sophronius of the young apprentice to a silversmith, who being employed by a nobleman to make a golden cross with precious stones, which he intended to offer to the church, resolved secretly to add to it his wages, that it might be from him like the widow's groat. The nobleman discovered what he had done by investigating the weight, when he obliged the lad to confess the truth; and he judged it such a proof of an heroic spirit, that he made him his heir.§ This is, indeed, a tale of ancient date, yet a few men of the old mark in walks of trade, have been found remaining even to our times, perpetuated not by means of hereditary profession as at Nuremburgh, but through the influence of the old Catholic morality, as in even the worst cities of France, of whom that just and benign Merlin, that father of learned booksellers on the Augustin's quay at Paris, was one, till lately, known to many scholars of different nations, and dear and venerable to all who had ever heard his sweet, wise words, issuing from a heart which seemed the very sanctuary of peace and honor. He hath lately been cut down, and sorrowful was the crowd that filled the nave and choir of St. Severin, while his body rested there, and mass of Requiem was sung. Men of various ranks stood around, but from the looks of all in common, both young and old, both of high and low degree, one might collect the general impression that the mould itself was broken, and that the loss is irreparable when such men die.

\* Jacob Bracellius de claris Genuensibus.

† Schriften, II. 278.

‡ Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum elogia.

§ Pratum Spirit. cap. CC.

Magnanimity was a virtue proposed to novices in religious orders, and enforced by holy masters. "It has its matter," we are told, "in the irascible quality of the soul, and its end is mighty honor and glory, not because it seeks glory as its end; for this it esteems but little, but it desires a great work, which is worthy of honor, and therefore it adds the most noble ornament to all virtue. It visits all fields and the camp of the living God, and animates heroic Christians, raising them above the level of the slothful and indifferent race. 'Certe magnanimorum sunt illustria exempla Sanctorum.'"<sup>\*</sup> Thus even the virtue of the meek inhabitants of cloisters was heroic. "I was ever so affected to maintain the point of honor," says St. Theresa, "that methinks I could never have turned back again upon any terms, when I had once said it."<sup>†</sup> Pelisson, that child of grace, was on the point of publicly embracing the Catholic faith, when De Montausier was reported to have said to a certain lady of the court, that if that happened he would be made preceptor to the dauphin and president at Mortier, upon which he instantly resolved to defer his act of publicly embracing the Catholic faith, which he did not execute until there was no longer a pretence to any one for attributing his conversion to human motives. Every year he celebrated the festival of his reception into the Church, and his deliverance from the Bastille by delivering some prisoners, which conduct evinced the same continued heroic courage.

If the virtue of political men and of merchants, whom prudence and interest must generally sway, of cloistered nuns, and convertiles, dead to all ambition of human praise, may be justly said to have been thus heroic, what may not be believed of the morality of those who followed the more eminent and exciting paths of life in those days of chivalry in which honor and religion went hand in hand? Pedantic learning bath concealed Christian titles. Heinsius talks of the ineffable and almost miraculous virtue of the Romans after the expulsion of the kings.<sup>‡</sup> Yet, compared to the justice of any humble son of the Church with plain heroic magnitude of mind, and celestial vigor armed, as he is presented in history during the ages of faith, how easy would it be to find words to express it, how very human, not to say how ambiguous doth that pompous virtue appear? But how could one describe the just and lofty mind of Catholics true to their profession, unless by borrowing some gracious verse from poets, as that in which they speak of coming thought on thought, and not a thought but thinks on dignity. The spirit of self-sacrifice so deeply and widely diffused through society often broke forth in sublime instances to be the praise of all future generations, as in the act of Eustache de St. Pierre and the other five citizens of Calais. Let it be remarked in this instance that it was not patriotism or fraternity, but religion which made them heroic. "It would be a great pity," said Eustache, "to suffer so many people here to die when there may be a remedy to deliver them. It

<sup>\*</sup> *Instructio Novitiorum* cap. XVIII. auct. P. Joan. à Jesu Maria.

<sup>†</sup> *Life*, I. chap. 3.

<sup>‡</sup> Heinsii *Orat.* XIV.



would be great alms and grace towards our Lord. I have such great hope of having pardon from our Lord if I should die to save this people, that I wish to be the first."

What heroism in the morality of that ancient chivalry which was considered to be equally with the clergy the support of justice? "Often have I taken delight," says the old historian of Du Guesclin, "in hearing read the deeds of our fathers under the grace of our Lord, from whom all grace comes. Above all, there was nothing that had relation to chivalry or to clergy which are the way and protection of justice, that was not dear to me. I always haunted in my youth with clerks and knights."\* Christine de Pisan after showing that the original object of chivalry was to defend the good against injustice, concludes that it was "very nobly and with just cause instituted, and that it is worthy of the highest renown."

I said, on first announcing the object of this investigation, that although we had withdrawn ourselves from scenes of human glory, we might oft again meet with knights, and how, in fact, without ingratitude, could we refuse to receive them, as they pass now before us? Let us only consider the worthies of that one family who were represented on Rinaldo's shield, and not as yet from a poetic picture but from real history, and it will be seen how chivalry and clergy were allied in the cause of justice. There we shall find that as often as the emperors by evil counsel invaded Italy with impious arms in order to subdue the sovereign pontiffs, the Atestine nobles, with the heroism of a pious and generous mind, undaunted by their threats, never hesitated to resist them, for the liberty of their country and of the church, and for the honor and worship of the true faith. Witness the first Azzo, in the year 949, who resisted Berenger the Third, from whose vengeance he had to fly with his wife into Germany, to Otho the Saxon, where he founded an illustrious line. Then followed his heroic son, Albert Azzo, the first Marquis of Este, by whose assistance Otho defeated the same Berenger when he again troubled Italy.

Ugo no less piously contended for the true pontiff, restoring to his seat the fifth Gregory, after which renouncing war, he turned his whole mind to contemplation, and built the monastery of Vagado. Berthold, son of the second Azzo, like his ancestors, contended for the authority of the Roman pontiffs, when Paschal the Second was persecuted, whom he delivered by defeating the emperor Henry, who, though his enemy, was awed into reverence on beholding the divine virtue of a hero who had so faithfully defended against his own impiety the thrice holy priest of God. Albertacius, the fifth marquis, for his noble qualities, as Ariosto testified, deserved to be the husband of Matilda. Rhainald, in defence of the Pope, Alexander the First, pushed forth his white eagle, which thenceforth became the ensignia of his race against the black eagles of Frederick Barbarossa, and in shock of battle with his own

\* *Chronique de du Guesclin*, III.

hand hurled from his horse that despiser of religion, who could scarcely escape with the aid of his knight, and who afterwards at Venice concluded that treaty with the pontiff, which secured the liberty of the holy Church. Azzo the Fourth delivered Verona from the infamous Salinguerra, and defeated Eccelino at Lubrara : his son Aldrobandino the second Prince of Ferrara, when but a youth, restored by arms to Innocent the Third, the towns which had been wrested from the church by the counts of Celani, who in revenge basely procured his death by poison. His brother, Azzo the Fifth, honored by Pope Honorius the Third, who made him Prince of Ancona and Senegallia, had been most dear to Frederick the Second ; but no sooner did that emperor attack the church, than he forsook and resisted him, choosing rather to please God than kings ; and when he defeated the imperial forces under the walls of Parma, and delivered that city, he chose for his share of the spoil nothing but the lions which were in the imperial camp, which he sent as trophies of his victory to Ferrara, where they were kept in that spot which has ever since retained their name.

This was the hero who delivered Italy from the monster Eccelino, who had devoured thirty-three thousand men. Borsio, created Duke of Ferrara by Paul the Second, devoted all his efforts to give his people peace. The noble Gyraldus saith that we can judge of the tranquillity of his mind from merely beholding that bronze image which represents him seated in the Forum, wearing that mild and truly regal aspect, to show that all within was composed of peace and justice. He it was who constructed at great expense the illustrious Carthusian monastery, where, after twenty-two years of glorious reign, he left his bones. Hercules the second Duke, spent his whole life in labors and the exercise of justice, as if his name had been a presage of his fortune. Alfonso the First was such a lover of tranquillity, that unless it had been otherwise ordained, he would have secured to the people perpetual peace, for under that warlike front represented by the ancient painter, all composed to Catonian gravity, lay hid as under clouds, a meek, gentle, and benign spirit. Yet a brave man was he who in the battle of Aquadusa, delivered Fabricius Colonna from the jaws of death, when wounded and lying amidst hostile swords. Hercules the Second, had not like the preceding, to lament a reckless youth, for while but a stripling, his heart was given all to God, and at that age when nature is intemperate, he who was held by no law made a law unto himself, and having appeased the perturbations of his own mind, all his care was to leave an example of just life and a solid peace to his people ; and knowing that no prince ever gained glory by warlike actions, without inflicting misery on men, he sought another way to glory by toiling for the public good, and for this end when he knew that there were persons who endeavored to alienate from him the mind of Paul, the sovereign pontiff, that he might secure peace he went to Rome, and when in presence of the pope, showed with eloquence that all the heroes of his family, from the first Azzo in 949, to his father Alfonso, during a space of five hundred and eighty-seven years, had given proof of their

faithful attachment to the Roman Church, the safety and honor, and freedom of whose sovereign pontiffs they had always preferred before their own.\* This was the true chivalrous spirit of the middle ages, so that these heroes who contended for the freedom of the Church might be said, like the Herculean of old, to have labored not only in the cause of justice, but for the salvation of the human race. The spirit of chivalry, however, then pervaded all orders in the state, and men of every degree.

Virgil's maxim, which Ives de Chartres styles the ancient praise of the powerful,

"Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,"

is quoted by that holy bishop in his collection, with as much emphasis as if it had been a decree of the canons, teaching the duty of all men invested with power.† How noble is that detestation of baseness which was such a characteristic of Catholic manners, that as the wood of Vezelai could testify one act of treason was sufficient to impart to the scene in which it occurred, a name of infamy which, stamped by the ancient tongue, no length of years could ever obliterate.‡ The sandy plain, too, in the valley of Thurr in Alsace, still preserving in its name of the field of lies the memory of the treason there consummated against the unhappy emperor Louis-le-debonnaire by his rebellious sons, is another of those spots "where a word, ghost-like, survives to show what crimes from hate have sprung."§ That profound sense of personal dishonor on beholding injustice triumphant, is assuredly also calculated to excite the highest admiration even when presented in the page of old romance, amidst wild and extravagant incidents. When Dan-ayn-le-Roux in the history of Gyron-le-Courtois, finds in a forest, a strange knight about to kill another knight and a lady who are bound to a tree, whom he accuses of treason, he throws himself between them, and exclaims, "Noble sir, do me not such an outrage and dishonor as to kill before my face this knight and this lady. The shame would be mine if they should die in my presence before the reason was made perfectly clear." Upon which the other replies in a transport of rage, "God's mercy, Sir, certainly one may now say truly, that knights errant are the most foolish men in the world, for they will often interpose in matters that concern them not. But tell me, fair Sir, I pray, how doth this affair concern you, that you suppose you ought to contend with me?"||

We may observe here, that the fabulist hath not roved to falsehood in his dreams, for this hearty zeal to serve justice, was once diffused and eminent, where now such selfishness reigns in recreant hearts, that men are slow or neglectful to absolve their part of good and virtuous, if it be not evident that their own persons or purses are at stake. Old affection for these tales of chivalry may excuse my

\* Gyraldi Ferrarriensis de Ferrar. et Atestineis Principibus Comment.

† Ivonis Carnot. Epist. LXI. CCX.

‡ Duchesne, Antiquit. des Villes de France, I. 217.

§ Wordsworth.

|| f. CCCXIII.



remarking that the maintenance of justice by individual force was not always represented in them, in exclusion of legal retribution, for even knight errants are shown respecting law. When Danayn-le-Roux hears the charge brought against Gyron and the lady by Hellyn-le-Roux, who was about to kill them in the forest, Danayn replies to him, "Sire, I am of opinion, according to the judgment of knight errants, that you cannot cause him to be put to death until you have proved your accusations against him in some court."\* The abuse of the chivalrous spirit, or the extravagant language of its admirers, ought not to render us insensible to the real merit which was indicated under that title. It should be remembered that for its greatest defects there was always a remedy at hand in the religious sentiment which had overthrown the whole Gentile theory of glory, and displayed a new banner. Aristotle styles honor "the greatest of external goods." Clearly, therefore, his idea of honor was wholly different from that of the just men of Catholic times, with whom it signified an internal consciousness of fidelity, and of whom we might say, in the words of St. Jerome, "that by flying from glory they deserved it."† "We ought to have regard to honor," says Giles of Colonna, "not as ambitious or as placing our end in honor, but as doing works worthy of honor."‡

The Pythagoreans had a saying, *Ἀνελεύθερος πᾶς ὅστις εἰς δόξαν βλέπει*, which might have been a motto in the middle ages, for such glory entered not into the motives of heroic men, when, as St. Jerome says, the desire of glory had been cured by the contention of humility. Catholicism, indeed, had its glory, but not such as "rears its heaven-offending trophies where praise can waste her voice on works of tears, anguish, and death."§ It was the glory of obedience, of sacrifice, of charity, humility, chastity, poverty. "The prince," says Giles of Colonna, "must not esteem himself happy when he is in glory with men, but only when he is in glory with God."|| Literally the mind of these middle ages might have been expressed in the words of the poet,

"This is true glory and renown: when God  
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks  
The just man, and divulges him through heaven  
To all his angels."

"The desire of human glory," says the angel of the school, "takes away magnanimity: for of necessity, he who seeks human favor must be subservient to the will of others in every thing that he says or does: and thus, while he studies to please men, he becomes the servant of each."¶ With knightly Catholics, honor was nothing but the fulfilment of justice. The Count de Montfort had been employed by St. Louis to pay his ransom to the sultan: the king and host were already embarked, and even far from shore, when the count said, laughing, that

\* f. CCCXIII. † Epist. 27. ‡ De Regim. Princip. II. 1. 24. § Wordsworth.

|| Egidius Romanus Regimine Principum, P. 1. Ltb. I cap. 8.

¶ S. Thom. de Regimine Principum, cap. 7.

the Sarrassins had been tricked out of more than 2000 besans, and that it was easy for any one to be more cunning than the traitors who had neither faith nor law. "But the king," says Joinville, "became very angry, and sent him back, at the great risk of his life, to restore that sum to the Sarrassins." An old French poet, after combating the chimerical ideas which some entertained respecting honor, examines expressly in what consists true honor in every condition of life, and decides that it is in the fulfilment of the particular duty attached to each, and in the exercise of all virtues.\*

"Is est honos homini pudico, meminisse officium suum."

Moreover the honor of the middle ages was generally a religious principle, as the Milanese had reason to remember, when their deputies discovered what were the designs of their own captain-general, and said in bitter self reproach, "We ought not to have placed our hopes in a man who had outraged God and the Church."† The frank and noble confidence of the chivalrous spirit was nothing but a reliance on justice. Don Alonzo VI., after being deprived of his kingdom of Leon, lived retired at the court of the Moorish king of Toledo, whence on the death of Don Sancho, the states called him to the crown, but as secretly as possible, fearing lest the Moors, hearing of their intention, might retain him by force. Alonzo immediately disclosed it all. This confidence appeared so admirable to the Moorish king, that though he had become acquainted with it, and taken measures to prevent his escape, he not only suffered him to depart free, but even supplied him with money necessary for the journey.‡

Stephen Pasquier shows that kingdoms in the middle ages have been sometimes preserved in consequence of having their young princes confided to the guardianship of their enemies, and cites as an instance John V. duke of Brittany, who in dying left his children under the protection of Oliver de Clisson, who had been his personal foe, and a claimant of the ducal throne. As soon as Clisson received the news of his appointment, he was visited by the countess of Penthievre, his daughter, who remarked to him that the opportunity, by means of this appointment, was now come to take possession of the duchy. On hearing her speak thus, this just prince was roused to indignation; "Ah, wicked, miserable creature," said he, "you will ruin at once both the honor and wealth of our house." He unsheathed his sword, as if the sense of injustice and dishonor had overcome every other sentiment; but she fled precipitately, and with such haste that she fell and broke a limb, of which she remained lame ever afterwards.§ Again, in what an heroic light does the justice of the middle ages, in relation to loyalty and personal gratitude, appear in the pages of history! When the prince of Wales offered to deliver Du Guesclin, on condition of his swearing that he would not bear arms against the king of England, nor assist count Henry in obedience to the will of

\* Gouget, Lib. Francoise, tom. XII. 213.

† Recherches de la France, Liv. VI. 31.

† Machiavel's Hist. of Florence, Lib. VI

§ Savedra, Christian Prince, II. 14.

the French king, the knight replied, "Alas, my Lord, how would it be possible for me not to serve before all others, and in every place, the king of France, and his blood, who has nourished me? Truly, I would rather die in your prisons where I am than take the oath."\*

The Catholic hero of the middle ages was no time-server, no slave to human respect, when justice was at stake—

"Nor number nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,  
Though single."

How noble and heroic does the justice arising from the principles of religion appear when contrasted with the civil prudence of a Cardan, where he says, writing as a philosopher,† "Always keep three things before your mind in every affair; *quam recte? cui bono? quid dicent homines?*" The just man, in Catholic ages, limited his inquiry to the first of these questions, and when once that was determined, took no thought for the consequences. That Heaven's will must be done, as is said in the oldest tragedy of the Greeks, was his conclusion.

*πίπτει δ' ἀσφαλὲς οὐδ' ἐπὶ νότῳ,  
κορυφᾷ Διὸς εἰ κρανθῇ πρᾶγμα τέλειον.‡*

Therefore the Catholic discipline was not designed for such carpet champions as old fable represents spending their luxurious days in the palace of Armida. *Cur timido animo Christianus es?* is the sudden and sublime interrogation of St. Jerome.‡ Let us hear the voice of the middle ages in the reproof which the holy hermit addresses to Rinaldo, in the Italian poet—

"Not underneath sweet shades, and fountains shrill,  
Among the nymphs, the fairies, leaves, and flowers,  
But on the steep, the rough and craggy hill  
Of virtue, stand this bliss, this good of ours;  
By toil and travel, not by sitting still  
In pleasure's lap, we come to honor's bowers:  
Why will you thus in sloth's deep valley lie?  
The royal eagles on high mountains fly."

Thus parlayed he—Rinaldo, hushed and still,  
Great wisdom heard in those few words compiled:  
He marked his speech—a purple blush did fill  
His guilty cheeks, down went his eye-sight mild  
The hermit, by his bashful look, his will  
Well understood, and said—"Look up, my chud!  
And painted in this precious shield, behold  
The glorious deeds of thy forefathers old;

\*Chronique de Du Guesclin, 275.

† Prudens Civilis, cap. 29. 24.

‡ Æschylus, Supplices, 85.

§ S. Hieronym. Epist. V.



Thine elders' glory herein see, and know  
 In virtue's path how they trod all their days  
 Whom thou art far behind—a runner slow  
 In this true course of honor, fame, and praise.  
 Up! up! thyself incite by the fair show  
 Of knightly worth which this bright shield bewrays.' '

The shield represented the heroes of the house of Este. There was seen Caius, chosen prince by the people, Aurelius, who, to his everlasting fame, preserved his subjects from the cruel Huns, Forrest, who fortified Aquilia's town, and for it died, Altine, who built the great city in the vale of Po, where they of Este should by succession long command, and rule in bliss and high renown, who fought against Odoacre, and died for his sweet country's sake, Alphorisio and Azzo, Boniface and Valerian, the last of whom dared to sustain the proud Goths, though scarce in years a man, then Henry, and Berengare the Bold, that served great Charles in his conquests high, Otho, and Almerike, the devout founder of so many churches, who seemed in contemplation wrapt, then Albert, who defeated the Danes, and Hugo, who possessed all Tuscany, Tedaldo, the puissant Boniface, the princess Maude, who conquered the fourth Henry, and from him took

"His standard, and in church it offered;  
 Which done, the pope back to the Vatican  
 She brought, and placed in Peter's chair again."

Azzo the fifth, and Guelpho, the Bold, Bertold,

"With the sixth Azzo, whom all virtues love."

Such was the pedigree of worthies who seemed in that bright shield to live and move, so that Rinaldo waked up, and caught new fire on beholding these nobles of his house. With such thoughts was the heroic spirit of the Catholic morality fed and nourished. Men did not, as at present, permit their members to dwell upon whatever subject involved any profit, any licence, any doubt, any blame, any scandal; but conformably to the apostle's precept, if any things were true, if any holy, any just, any pure, if there was any love, or anything of good report, if there were any virtue, and any praise, they thought of those things.\* Hence, in ages of faith, not only, as the poet says, a proper, but also a most glorious and inspiring study was that of human nature. Shakespeare had only known in reality, and in imagination could have only contemplated a society wholly and exclusively Catholic, when he broke forth in that exclamation "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

"The Spaniards," says Don Savedra, "love religion and justice; they are constant in labors, and profound in council, neither elated by prosperity, nor depress-

\* Philip, IV. 8

ed by misfortune.”\* You have in these words accurately and beautifully portrayed the character of the Catholic morality in general during the middle ages. Men now are incessantly taunting generous and heroic youths, by reminding them of what they call the inexorable necessities of life, of which they are for imposing a fresh load at every stage. Aristotle says, that “all necessity is a sad thing;”† elsewhere he remarks, that “youth knows of no necessity.” So it was with men, not in theory alone, but practically, during the middle ages. Necessity was not the word to use in attempting to persuade spirits of the old mark. Catholicism knew of no necessity but that of obeying God. Riches had not weakened in men all sentiment, by that atmosphere of little jealousies, little vanities, and fictitious wants, in which they cause so many at present to live without interruption.

The Stagyrite had condemned the pompous trifler, who did all things not for the sake of honor and justice, but in order to show his wealth, thinking that by means of it men would gaze upon him with admiring eyes.‡ “Who would not desire to hold this citadel of virtue,” asks St. Ambrose, “unless avarice had first weakened and bent the vigor of his mind? For while we desire to increase riches, to heap up money, to possess lands, to be the first in wealth and possessions, we lay aside the form of justice, and forfeit the common benefit.”§ The phrase “a good man,” to signify a rich man, is put by Shakespeare in the mouth of a Jew. Had he lived in later times, he need not have sought so far for one to use it. “Avarice,” says St. Bernard, “rolls on four wheels of vices, pusillanimity, inhumanity, contempt of God, and forgetfulness of death,” precisely the vices most contrary to the spirit and manners of the middle ages. They were not familiar with such men as Argyrippus in the old comedy, who is represented crouching to his slave when he can gain twenty minæ from him, and addressing him with the epithets, “*Salus interioris hominis, amorisque imperator.*”|| “So detestable is avarice,” says Giles of Colonna, “that it is better to be prodigal than avaricious, inasmuch as it is better to have a curable than an incurable disease.” “Parsimony also is detestable,” says that blessed doctor, “which renders men sad at parting with their money, as if it were incorporated with themselves.” The proverb says, “vile men spoil a marriage and a feast for a penny-worth of pepper, rendering a whole banquet indecent from wishing to save a moderate expense.”¶

Persons exposed to any strong temptations, were restrained from performing the action legally denounced by pledging their word of honor, not their money. Charity and blessed mercy dictated, indeed, as we shall see hereafter, innumerable acts of heroic forgiveness; but even in the lowest ranks of the people it would have been deemed infamous to seek a pecuniary reparation from the tribunals

\* Savedra, Christian Prince, 380.

† Metaphys. Lib. I. cap. 4. ‡ Lib. IV.

§ S. Ambrosii Lib. Offic. I. c. 28.

|| Plautus Asinaria, III. 3.

¶ De Régim. Princip. II. 1. 17. 24.

for any injury sustained by the intimate sense of that highest injustice which was synonymous with dishonor. In short, the history of the middle ages shows that it was then universally, as at present in Catholic states, where in times of trial every event and circumstance of the world gives occasion to scenes of the noblest heroism, and the highest honor. Enter the sanctuary, visit the court, the tribunals, penetrate into private houses, from the palace to the cottage, and you find that it is so. It is a Pius VI., a good shepherd, ready to lay down his life for his flock; it is a Don Carlos, a just and religious king, refusing all proposals of private compensation, offering himself for his people, serving them with his person, having for his cry of arms, some high sentence like that of the tragic Sophocles, "Whether successful or unfortunate, we shall be found on the side of God."

—ἡ γὰρ εὐτυχεῖς

σὺν τῷ θεῷ φανούμεθ', ἡ πεπωκότεσι.\*

It is a judge who waters his couch with tears before he awards just judgment; it is a tender mother who thanks God that her son has fallen in the service of his king, and in defence of Christendom; it is a wife solitary and helpless in a land of exile, who sends forth her royal consort to win the palm of true honor as a Christian king, and who dies after his departure through anxiety for his safety. You perceive, reader, how the events which are passing before our eyes can throw light upon the history of past ages, how easy it would be to multiply instances, and how interminable might be the development of this truth, so rich are the varied scenes of human life where Catholicism reigns in all that can exalt the imagination, ennoble the character, and strengthen the heart. The German poets of the twelfth century, in their magnificent opening of the Nibelungen lays, announcing their intention of singing the deeds of heroes, the joys and woes of just and glorious men, promise in fact nothing but what the historians of their age could furnish from living manners and the fluctuating phenomena of real life. Without doubt, the heroic character of this ancient morality involved difficulties and dangers. No one need be told that more than ordinary care was needful in the guidance of such a spirit as that ascribed to king Don Sebastian in the old chronicles, who would have condemned Hercules himself for having had recourse to the prudent policy remarked by Dionysius, in that act when he drove the herd before the cave of Cacus, in order to discover whether they really had within it the stolen oxen.† Of this young king Jerôme Conestagius says, in his history of Portugal and Castile, that he used to rejoice when he fought alone with some ferocious beast. If he were about to navigate on the Tagus, or to go by sea from one place to another, he thought it disgraceful to embark on a calm sea. Therefore he studiously waited for tempests: so that by a certain cruel

\* *Œdip. Tyr.* 145.

† *Antiquit. Rom. Lib. I.* 39.



fate, he seemed to hasten to his death.\* Under the influence of an heroic spirit, he that should have been, as the abbot of St. Maurice says of Manfred, "a noble creature, he that had all the energy which would have made a goodly frame of glorious elements, might, from their not being wisely mingled or properly directed, become an awful chaos—light and darkness—and mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts mixed, and contending without end or order, all dormant or destructive." Then might come the fluent novelist, demonstrating how much better morality was understood by those around him, though he might address himself to a generation the image of whose best-loved men would be but fit to be an ale-house sign, resembling Spenser's portrait of loathsome gluttony:

"Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat; "

men whose memories as well as hopes are in their stomach, so that they would feel no shame in strengthening their evidence, like the lying slave in Plautus, who after pretending that he had fought from morning till night in some great engagement, adds, "*Hoc adeo hoc commemini magis quia illo die impransus fui.*"† But the blemishes of the heroic character were so unlike the grossness of these spirits vile, that they constituted rather what St. Francis de Sales terms, "the dear imperfections which are means of attaining to perfection." A modern poet seems of this opinion when he says,

"The attributes of those high days  
Now only live in minstrel-lays;  
For nature, now exhausted, still  
Was then profuse of good and ill:  
Strength was gigantic, valor high,  
And wisdom soared beyond the sky,  
And beauty had such matchless beam  
As lights not now a lover's dream."

Whatever be the dangers and obstacles attached to the character of heroic virtue, it was clearly shown by the most precise and guarded moralists of the middle age, to be the highest prerogative to crown man's nature. "They who are peculiarly inclined to vice," says Louis of Blois, "and who combat against it with all their strength, arrive at a higher perfection than others who have less difficulties. The image of a prince, which is carved upon a stone with infinite labor, is a far more precious work than if it had been imprinted on a soft and plastic earth. Nay, more, if those who courageously combat should depart from life with some imperfections, and remain for some time in purgatory, when purified, they will enjoy in heaven greater glory than others who have not shown equal courage and devotion, though they may have attained to the enjoyment of God without passing through the purifying flames."‡

\* Hieronymi Correstagii de Portug. et Castil. Conjunct. Lib. I.

† Amphis I. 1.

‡ Instit. Spirit. cap. VIII. § 3.

The moderns, whose views of morality are said to be so superior to those of the middle ages, are impressed with a profound conviction of the truth of what Plautus says, whose words at least prove that they have made no progress in one direction :

“Nec quisquam est tam ingenio duro  
Nec tam firmo pectore, quin ubi quicquam  
Occasionis sit, sibi faciat bene.”

Nay, there are many of them who seem to believe with Protagoras, that the justice and virtue of other men being thought useful to ourselves, therefore the state praises and inculcates them in every man.\* In general, all the writers and legislators appear profoundly impressed with the maxim of Galen, who used to say, that “utility alone amongst mortal things is divine.” What nature herself rejects, and a certain generous sentiment of virtue proclaiming that self-interest ought not to be the ruling motive of human actions recoils from, the most popular moral writers of our age either directly teach, or clearly enough indicate : nor is it their schools alone that are infested with this persuasion, but much more the common scenes of life. “Sentit domus uniuscujusque, sentit forum, sentit curia, campus, socii, provinciæ.” Give them heedful note, and you will see that they are accustomed to estimate all things in part and in relation to themselves ; you will find them indeed full of noble expressions for a general woe, but evincing real sorrow only when under a private calamity. The ancient philosophers, however, on this ground, at least, would hardly subscribe to the opinion of the great modern author, whose affirmation that morality is at present better understood than in Catholic ages, has been allowed to pass current. The Pythagorians certainly would have refused, who taught what would be flat treason against the modern civilization, that “men should have regard, in the first place, to what is good and honest ; but that utility and convenience should be ranked in a secondary place.”† It must be admitted that the reverse of this maxim is no where found in the moral features of men during the ages of faith ; though what their views of morality in this respect lost in perspicuity they assuredly gained in heroism. In the estimation of our ancestors, virtue was nothing else but the preference given to what was just to what was unjust, whatever that preference might have cost. It is true we find them following in Plato’s steps, to show that the unjust must be of necessity not only more laborious, but also more unpleasant than the just and holy life.‡ “Remember,” says John Picus of Mirandola, “that it is far sweeter to conquer a temptation, than to consent to the sin to which you are inclined ; and in this many are deceived, because they do not compare the sweetness of victory to the sweetness of sin, but they compare the battle to the pleasure : and yet the man who has a thousand times tried what it is to yield to temptation, ought at least for once to try what it is to conquer the temptation.”§ Still, while the spiritual and heroic authors of the

\* Plato Protag.

† De Legibus, Lib. II.

† Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vit. cap. 31.

§ Regulæ dirigentes.

middle ages at times speak thus, they never let pass an occasion without endeavoring to instil the spirit of sacrifice and disinterestedness into the minds of men. "Remark," says Lewis of Grenada, "that the holy Simeon sought not his own but others' good, for he was solicitous rather for the salvation of others than of himself. 'Expectabat enim consolationem Israël,' " for which, too, St. Ambrose commends him, saying, "Well did the just man, because he sought, not his own safety, but that of the people; whereas men in this world live only for themselves, and while their own affairs prosper, they think it no concern of theirs though the sky should fall, or the earth be consumed with fire."\*

"As charity is the life of all virtue, so," continues St. Catherine of Sienna, "self-love, which destroys charity, is the execrable source of all evils. All scandals, cruelties, hatreds, and miseries, proceed from that venomous root. This detestable love mortally wounds the universal world, and infects with disease the mystical body of the holy Church, all whose virtues spring from charity."†

St. Peter being in glory upon the top of Mount Thabor, wished for three tabernacles there, one for Christ, one for Moses, another for Elias; "and," observes Father Diego de Stella, "never remembered himself."‡

"It seems conformable to nature," says Giles of Colonna, "that a part should expose itself for the whole; for we see that when the head is in danger and the whole body, immediately the arm, which is a part, exposes itself wholly for the head, lest the whole body should perish. So in like manner should kings be ready to devote themselves for the people."§ This blessed doctor, even in the comparative intensity of pleasures, shows that the selfish are by nature base, and therefore places gluttony in the lowest hell. The absence of selfishness was deemed the grand remedy for all sin. "In this all doctors agree," says St. Bonaventura, "that the cause of all malice is fear or love, and the cause of fear is self-love. How can you then sin from fear, who desire to be afflicted, and despised, and trampled upon by others? and how can you sin from love, who desire that all love should be transferred to God? Thus you will pass to perfect innocence, and the consummation of sanctity."|| All members of the ecclesiastical state were to imbibe the spirit of the example of Jesus Christ, who, as St. Bernard reminded Pope Eugene, came on earth not to do his own will. In fact, those orders of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem, like the religious orders in general, owed their virtues to the total eradication of selfishness from their members. No one thought of his own but of the general good, which merely formed part of the interest of the universal church. The verses of St. Columban, addressed to his monks are to this effect:

"Non sibi quis vivat; Christo sed vivat ubique.  
Non tua, sed Christi quæras, qui diligis illum.  
Non te, non mundum, Christum sed dilige solum."

\* Ludovic. Grenad. In Festo Purificat. Concio IV.

† S. Cath. Senensis Dialog. Tractat. I. c. 7.

‡ On the Contempt of the World, I.

§ Ægidius Romanus de Regim. Principum, I. 1. 14.

|| Stimul. Amoris. Pars II. 6.



Now, during the ages of faith, the spirit of the monastic orders was the spirit of perfection, to which all men knew that they were called, though its external form might depend upon their social position : and, as Richard of St. Victor says, "perfection consisting in divine love required that men should do nothing from their own will, but commit all things to the divine disposition. All their vows, all their desires must hang on the divine nod."\* To use the language of Æschylus, all their trust was placed in τέλειον ὑψιστον Δία, Him who brings events to their issue.† "The philosophers," says St. Ambrose, "used to distinguish between the honestum and the utile, including under the latter all that related to the goods of this life. But we measure all things by the single formula of what is honest and decorous, 'nihilque utile nisi quod ad vitæ illius æternæ proposit gratiam definimus, non quod ad delectationem præsentis.'"+ In Paradise, too, Dante represents the saints as still having more regard to the blessedness of others than of their own. Thus, describing the amen which followed from either choir, when told that their dead bodies should be restored to them, he adds, that it arose

"Not for themselves, but for their kindred dear,  
Mothers and sires, and those whom best they loved,  
Ere they were made imperishable flame."‡

I am aware, indeed, that in the very lives of the saints themselves, and in the whole ground of their sanctity, the modern philosophers imagine that they discover the action of the principle which is condemned by them in theory. They believe them to be eminent in the qualities which they cultivate from selfish motives ; and repeat the suggestion respecting Job, "numquid Job frustra timet Deum ?" concluding with Epictetus, that we generally find piety where there is utility.

"Of a truth," says the good Franciscan, John of Bordeaux, after citing these words, "He does not approach to the purity of Christianity : he pretends that piety takes its birth in utility, so that it is interest which gives rise to devotion. Yes, among the profane, but not among Christians, who, being acquainted with the maxims of our holy religion, have no other end but to serve God, for his love and for his glory ; forgetting all considerations of their own advantage, they aspire to attain to that devotion which is agreeable to Him, without any view to their own interest."§

Only observe what passes around you. Is it when men are thinking of themselves and of their own temporal interests that they approach the Christian mysteries ? No, but they repair to them either to exercise or to acquire the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is when they are in a disposition to give up every thing, honor, esteem, and life itself, that the altar of God has an attraction which they cannot resist. Some modern philosophers have remarked this fact, and their admiration does them infinite honor, though their explanation is deficient.||

\* De Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis.

† Eumenid. 28.

‡ St. Ambrosii Officiorum, Lib. I. cap. 9.

§ XIV.

|| Epictet, Chrest. 233.

"All these men," says Fichte, "martyrs, confessors, apostles of nations, heroes, conquerors, men of science, all have sacrificed their personal existence for an idea. What was their reward? They have gained an entrance into a new vital atmosphere, of intellectual clearness and translucency, which makes them utterly incapable of enjoying a life in any other element of being. They need no compensation, they have gained an inestimable prize." He discerns that it was the spirit of self-sacrifice which produced all this. "For who," he continues, "were the foremost in giving the countries of modern Europe a shape in which they were worthy to be the abode of civilized nations? History makes answer: they were religious men, who, in the stedfast belief that it was the will of God that the wild fugitive in the woods should be brought to a life of order, and to the blessed knowledge of a benevolent duty, left the lands of their birth, and all the sensuous and spiritual gratifications they afforded; left their families, their friends, and kindred, encountered want and hardship, and often died the death of martyrs, and all this for the sake of an idea, and in this idea for the sake of mankind.

"And should any object to me, that they sacrificed their present life in the expectation of an infinitely higher beatitude in heaven, which they hoped to earn by their endurance and their toil, that is, that they sacrificed one pleasure to another, the less to the greater, so that they cannot justly be deemed to have acted in the spirit of self-sacrifice, I would entreat such an objector well to weigh the following considerations. How did they attain to this firm faith in another world, a faith which they attested by their sacrifices? And what, in fact, is this faith, considered as an act of the soul? Does not the soul, which assumes the undoubted existence of another world, and clings to it with an immovable faith, in this very act make a sacrifice of the present world? And is not this faith of itself the sacrifice completed and fulfilled once for all within the soul? which inward act of the spiritual life is afterwards made manifest in a variety of outward actions. Granting that there is nothing at all marvelous in their sacrificing every thing, after they once believed in an everlasting life; granting that it is all perfectly intelligible, and that the objector himself would do the same in the same situation; the marvel, however, is, that they did so believe; and this, the slave of self and sense, who is incapable of withdrawing his eyes from the present world, will never be able to do; he will never be able to put himself into the same situation!" So far the German philosopher who has had the advantage of finding one, perhaps, still greater than himself, to give his thoughts expression in our language. The Catholic religion, however, enabled men to place the question on a clearer basis, and to determine it with more precision and justice.

The spiritual guides of the middle ages left men no choice between the contending opinions of the ancients, respecting the motives and end of virtuous actions. "All will void of the will of God, that is," continues the author of *Theologia*

Germanica, "all self-will, and whatever proceeds from self-will, is sin. As long as a man seeks his own good, and that which is best for himself as his own good, and as for himself, that he never finds; for as long as he seeks thus, he does not seek what is best for himself, so far is he from finding it; for as long as a man is thus disposed he seeks himself, and he thinks that himself is that greatest good: and man is not the greatest good as long as he seeks himself."\* On the other hand, a man should love himself in God. Here the religious innovators went again astray, and then came the sophists, beginning by an extravagance, and because it is true that the best men thus love themselves, concluding that they love only themselves: from all which absurdity the Catholic school was free. Thus we find it was reserved for Christian moralists and those too, during the ages of monastic learning, to decide that abstruse question respecting the motives of action which so much perplexed and divided the ancients and which the apostate of Erfurt revived in a new form, deciding it directly in contradiction to the unerring text. Cicero, after remarking that the stoics separated what was honest from what was convenient, "*non nomine, sed genere toto*," and that the Peripatetics combined them together, proceeds to add with more judgment and acuteness than modern philosophers have evinced in relation to the same point, "*hæc est non verborum parva, sed rerum permagna dissensio*."† That difference should now be considered as forever set at rest, by the Catholic philosophers. Manzoni considers what ought to be the national idea of disinterestedness as opposed to the exaggerated and chimerical sense which is sometimes attached to it, in order to ascertain what influence self-interest should exercise in morality; for Sismondi condemned the Catholic motive of giving alms for the sake of one's own soul. "Remark," says Manzoni, "the progress of this exaggeration within the mind which commits it. Disinterestedness," it begins, "is shown when to perform a just action, a man sacrifices some present pleasure, or incurs some pain which he might have avoided. The greater the sacrifice the more disinterested is the action, and vice versâ. All the pleasures which may enter for motives to the action, will diminish its merit, and give it a character of egotism. All the pleasures and the hopes of pleasure, of whatever order or in whatever time, all that in the last analysis signifies pleasure, as promises, rewards, felicity, will render it less disinterested and consequently less virtuous." Here begins the error which is against an eternal law of the human soul, against a condition of intelligence and of justice,

*τίς γὰρ ἐσθλὸς οὐχ αὐτῷ φίλος; ‡*

or, as the English Sophocles saith, "Love, loving not itself, none other can." This doctrine proposes as perfection what is impossible. The condemnation which is associated with the idea of pleasure arises only from knowing that there are many

\* Cap. 42.

† De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. 7.

‡ Œdip. Col. 275.



pleasures opposed to duty. To push this condemnation to the general idea of pleasure, is to employ a noble sentiment to authorize an error and to reject an idea, although it is separated from the quality which alone made it worthy of rejection. When the word interested is transferred to the future life, it assumes wholly a different signification. What does a Christian mean by the good of his soul? Considering it in another life he means a felicity of perfection, a repose which consists in being absolutely according to order, in loving God fully, in having no other will but his; in being exempt from every grief because exempt from every inclination to evil; and with regard to the present life he means a felicity of progress to perfection, an advance in order and in the hope of joining the other state. This is the sense of the profound admonition of St. Paul to Timothy, "*Pietas autem ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habens vitæ quæ nunc est, et futuræ.*" It is impossible to propose a more noble view for the moral conduct of man.\*

I think it has now been shown clearly that the morality of the ages of faith was heroic, and that its heroism so far from resembling the extravagance of modern writers, was as rational and solid as it was generous. Let us pass on to consider other features essential to the morality of the Catholic Church.

---

## CHAPTER VII.



AT the time when Charlemagne was entrenched on the banks of the Ora at Wolmerstede, in East Saxony, the infidel prince Wedekind is related to have repaired to the royal camp in the disguise of a beggar, not through fear, as he was then reconciled, but in order to scrutinize the manners of the Christians. The paschal solemnities were at hand, and the king and all the host were commemorating the Lord's passion. Having crossed the river he joined the multitude of poor persons who daily flocked to court, but on the holy day of Easter when he applied for alms, he was recognized, and asked by the king what were the motives which had induced him to come in a manner so unworthy of his rank. He confessed that it was curiosity which had prompted him, in order to examine into their lives and customs. "Permit me now," said he, "most serene king, to demand what is it that hath this day so much delighted you? You appeared during the last few days wholly cast down, oppressed with sorrow, and I could not discover the cause, and lo, I beheld you this morning in your temple full of gladness and rapture, and so

\* Osservaz sulla, Morale Cattolica, 239.

sudden and complete a change excites my astonishment?" The king then explained to him the great mysteries of faith, and showed him the ground of his lamentation and of his joy.\* This little narrative will prepare you, reader, for the observations that I have now to offer : for you may perceive from it that sensible and deep impressions were made upon the minds of men during the ages of faith by supernatural motives ; and it is my present object to show that the justice imparted to those who hungered and thirsted after perfection in this life was divine, and the whole tenor of morality of ages of faith, supernatural both in its motives and in its effects, superior and even perhaps sometimes contrary to what men would have conceived or practised, if left without the assistance of an express and positive revelation of their Creator's will. For though the natural law is promulgated to man as soon as he comes to the use of reason,† and though he is wisely exhorted, by poets as well as by philosophers, to withdraw himself from ways that run not parallel to nature's course, yet in consequence of the incapacity of that law to meet the disarrangement introduced by sin into the original order, and from the uncertainty in which he stands respecting what is the direction of nature's course, from which corrupt passions are continually drawing him aside, a new law had become necessary for the government and restoration of his fallen state, and additional light was required to enable him to discern what was the original design, and the true principles, the observance of which was indispensable for the perfection and felicity of his nature.

Savonarola was true to the Catholic faith in teaching the philosophers of Italy, that the Christian life could not have its roots in the natural love of man, or in the sensitive parts of his nature, or in the imagination ; nor again in the natural light of reason, for then faith would be only an opinion, nor in the influence of any natural cause, since the whole Christian life is spiritual, and independent of the body, and capable of universal practice ; but that the root and foundation of the Christian life, is the grace of God, which is a supernatural gift infused into the soul. This was the Catholic doctrine acutely maintained. Those, indeed, whom, as the church says, "God had purged from all ancient corruption, and rendered capable of the holy novelty,"‡ had not cast off the grace and beauty of nature. The natural law was not abrogated ; for to have supposed that God does not require its observation would have been the same thing as to suppose that it had no existence, which is absurd.§ That the Christian character, though in this sense supernatural, retained all that was truly amiable and good in the ancient manners, is admitted in the reply of the Pagan father of Cymodoce to Lasthenes the Christian, in the celebrated work, entitled the Martyrs, which paints with such historical fidelity the two societies which were dividing the world. "You appear to me," says the admirer of the Homeric life, "to be wholly of the ancient times,

\* Albert Krantzii Metrop. Lib. 1.

† Third Collect for Holy Week.

‡ Ligorio Theolog. Lib. I. Tract. I.

§ La Hogue Tractat. de Religione. I. 2.

although I have not seen your words in Homer ! Your silence has the dignity of that of the sages. You rise to sentiments full of majesty, not on the golden wings of Euripides, but on the celestial wings of Plato. In the midst of your sweet abundance you enjoy the graces of friendship. There is nothing about you forced or strained ; all is content, persuasion, love.”\* Would you see this exemplified in history ? Read the public and domestic life of Ferdinand and Isabella, in the Chronicles of Spain, by Lucius Marinæus, the Sicilian. What admirable pictures have you there ! What Homeric simplicity ! What tenderness ! What poesy in all the detail of manners !† Manzoni has admirably treated on the correspondence between Catholic morals with the natural sentiment of right and justice,‡ the union and harmony of which are proved by the testimony not alone of history and experience, but also of ancient philosophers.

There are Pagan moralists to whom we might have recourse in order to shame the admirers of the natural and passionate character ; for even the manners of the blessed meek are recommended by an ancient Aristotelian philosopher, who makes mildness consist in being able to bear insult and neglect, and in not being quickly moved to anger, but having a sweetness of address and an imperturbable tranquillity in the soul, exempt from all desire of contention. Still it is no less true, that the morality of the Catholic society during ages of faith, if conformable to nature, in its original state, or Homeric, according to the ideal of poets and philosophers, was something also beyond and often even contrary to what was actually in the thoughts of man. Real humanity and goodness can have no existence without the action of an influence superior to nature ; and this the poet discerns, saying,

—“ by grace divine

Not otherwise, O nature ! we are thine.”§

It is men with natural virtues who fill the world with crimes and woe, for they are passion’s slaves, and therefore their virtues are not sure and constant. Homer perceived what was the highest praise, and investing his hero with divine virtue, styles him *πολύτλητον*, which is the very character that is formed by the supernatural principles of the Catholic faith, and in perfection by them alone. Christian severity and Christian love are intimate relations, and therefore to the voluntary mortifications which we observed in a former book, to those spiritual and sacramental communions with God, not as reigning in heaven, but as suffering in his passion, the justice, the divine patience of the ages of faith must mainly be ascribed. With natural indulgence, you have hatred, jealousy, pride, and cruelty, for without an initiation into the mysteries of faith, from which springs the principle of the supernatural life, what is conformable to corrupt nature, or as Pindar says, what is natural must, generally, prevail.”

*τὸ δὲ φῶς κράτιστον ἀπαν.*||

\* Liv. 2. † De Reb. Hispaniæ. Lib. XXI. ‡ Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica, cap. V.  
§ Wordsworth. || Olymp. IX.



"Hæc curare voluit Socrates, curare potest Deus. O quam miserum animal homo est," continues Marsilius Ficinus, "nisi aliquando evolet super hominem, commendet videlicet seipsum Deo. Deum amet propter Deum et cætera propter ipsum. Hæc unica problematum illorum solutio est, requiesque malorum."\*

"I have remarked," says Bossuet, "that the apostle, speaking of those who love themselves and their pleasure, calls them 'men cruel, without affection, without pity;' and I have been often astonished at so strange a union. In fact, this blind attachment to pleasure seems at first to be something gentle, that would shun cruelty and malevolence; but one is soon undeceived, and able to detect in this apparent gentleness, a malignant and pernicious sweetness. When I hear voluptuous persons speak in the Book of Wisdom, I can find nothing more smiling and agreeable; they speak of nothing but flowers and feasting, dancing and amusement. 'Let us crown our heads with flowers before they are faded.' They invite all the world to partake of their pleasures. How sweet are their words! how joyous their temper! how desirable their company! But attend to the conclusion of this discourse. 'Let us oppress the just and the poor, let us not pardon either the widow or the orphan.' What a change is here, Christians, and who would have expected so unpitiable a cruelty from such sweetness? This is the genius of pleasure; it loves to oppress the just and the poor; the just who are contrary to it, the poor who are to be its prey."†

The Stoics said that the end of philosophy was to live according to nature, and the moderns, with a false idea of nature, say the same; but Plato, with higher wisdom and greater subtilty of penetration, maintained that it was to be made conformable to God, in which position he did but forestall the fundamental law of Catholic morals. The heresy of our age is the idolizing of nature, of the creature over the Creator. Whatever, we are told, is conformable to nature, and to nature as we find it, is right. "How times are changed!" cries a holy Benedictine of the present day, "our fathers sometimes followed the vicious impulses of corrupt nature through weakness, in our philosophic age they are followed by system."‡ "Among nations which have departed from the principles of faith, we find," as Ventura justly remarks, "that ethics, and all sacred discipline, have given way along with theology, and that a certain rational system of ethics has been substituted for that which derived its force from God, in the same manner as what is so falsely termed rational Christianity, was substituted for positive, in which the private reason was not guided by divine discipline, but divine discipline by private reason."§ Hence the astonishment and offence evinced by the moderns whenever presented with any of the especial virtues of the Catholic morality; for there are virtues which belong to it in a peculiar manner, having been, as it were, first revealed by the Gospel. The heathens felt the same surprise when they first be-

\* Epist. Lib. I. to Landino.

† Serm. sur l'Impénitence finale.

‡ Jamin. Traité de la Lecture Chrét. 118.

§ Ventura de Methodo Philosophandi, cap. II. art. 7.

held the fruits of divine faith ; and St. Chrysostom had to show how little many who were called Christians differed from Pagans, either in their practice, or even in their notions of virtue.\* The disciples of the modern school seem at the best only in the number of those amongst whom Virgil counted himself, when guiding Dante—men

“Who the three holy virtues put not on,  
But understood the rest.”†

What are their accomplishments and graces, but those of the Gentiles—probity, generosity, courage, friendship ? If they love those only who love them, what is this but to follow the impulse of nature ? No mysteries are required to teach that love ; Gentiles practised it. When do they love their enemies, obey men for God’s sake, perform works of humility, and take up their cross ? They are generous, brave, and moral ; but so were Alcibiades, Achilles, and Julian. The heathen Saxons appeared at Rome, like their descendants at the present day, with the countenance of angels ; but what the Catholic discipline required was that men should have the minds of angels, and possess that interior life which is implied in the various supplications in the divine prayer of our Redeemer, which used to be on every tongue. St. Theresa, in her “Way of Perfection,” examines each of these petitions, with a view to determine who are the persons that can repeat it with consistency.

Clearly, it is more than mere human virtue which can justify men in calling God their father dwelling in heaven ; which can enable them truly to hallow his name, to wish for the coming of his kingdom, and accomplishment of his will. Nature of herself feels not the want of that daily bread, nor can she unassisted plead for mercy on the ground of having herself forgiven. Instead of wishing to be delivered from temptations, she daily impels men to search for them. Nor is there any evil from which she desires to be delivered, excepting disease, loss of property, the death of the body, or other calamities to which our frail and wretched flesh is heir. True, as St. Augustin says, speaking of the Romans, “ they who refrain shameful lusts, not by the faith of piety emanating from the Holy Spirit, and by the love of intellectual beauty, but by the desire of human praise and glory, are not indeed holy, but less vile.”‡ Unquestionably there is much that is brilliant, and at times fascinating in the natural manners of men, and somewhat that seems austere and repulsive in those of Catholicism, though after all what do the virtues, and accomplishments, and transports of the worldly race amount to ? These are admirable men, we are told ; but what is there admirable, if you approach nearer ? What is there enviable ? Read the testimonies collected by that anatomist of melancholy, who with all his pretensions to sit alone, was himself but one of the sad choir, and then methinks you will

\* On Compunction, Lib. I. cap. 4. † Purg. VII. 31. ‡ De Civit. Dei, Lib. V. 13.

be less anxious to institute a comparison, with the view of coming to a conclusion unfavorable to the effects of the supernatural morals inculcated by the Catholic religion. No; whenever the morality of the ages of faith is superseded by the manners of rationalism, the event, however it may be qualified, amounts, in fact, to the erecting the standard of Satan, naturally so glorious in the eyes of Adam's evil brood, and beating down that of Christ, which is, according to the same nature, its scorn and aversion. It is the triumph of ambition over humility, of pride over meekness, of pleasure over the mourning of the just, of vain-glory over justice, of hatred over charity, of lust and excess over purity and temperance, of passion and revenge over the spirit of forgiveness, and sacrifice, and peace, in the imitation of the Lamb of God; in a word, it is the substitution of human misery for the beatitude announced and everlastingly imparted by the Gospel.

Yielding to philosophy all that truth and justice required, the Catholic writers from the beginning, declared that the morality which was to accompany and verify faith, must be in its motives, in its end, and in its discipline, something far different from what is ordinarily understood by nature, in the thoughts and language of men. The laudable Roman disposition was a favorite expression in the mouths of the heathens in St. Augustin's time, and we hear the great doctor exclaiming, "O indoles Romana laudabilis! O offspring of the Reguli, the Scævolas, the Scipios, the Fabricii, if any thing in you shines naturally laudable only by true piety can it be purged and perfected."\* "Si enim veræ virtutes sunt," he adds, "quæ nisi in eis quibus vera inest pietas esse non possunt;"† for the virtues which seem to be such, unless referred to God, are rather vices than virtues. However true and worthy they may be thought, yet if they be referred to themselves, and to nothing higher, they are inflated and proud, and therefore are to be judged vices, not virtues.‡ "Sometimes," says St. Augustin, "the most open vices are conquered by other hidden vices, which are thought to be virtues, in which reign pride, and a certain ruinous altitude of pleasing one's self; superbia et quædam sibi placendi altitudo ruinosa. Then only are vices conquered where they are conquered by the love of God."§ This is the novel morality to which the Church alludes, when she prays that men may be purified from all the encroachments of their former ways, and made capable of a holy renovation.|| This is that way of the cross, that life of obedience, that felicitous state, which is compared by the writers of the middle age to a garden of flowers, more beautiful than ever met mortal eye, and embalmed with a celestial fragrance. "Here," says Thomas à Kempis, "all things are bright, flourishing, odoriferous, and delightful. These flowers of the mysteries of Christ and his blessed mother, have so sweet an odor, so wondrous a flavor, so great a beauty, so powerful an ardor, that they expell from the languishing soul all temptations and carnal love, all

\* De Civitate Dei, Lib. II. 26.

§ Id XXI. 16.

† Id. Lib. XIX. 4.

‡ Id, XIX, 25.

|| Collect. 3rd fer. in holy week.



anger and indignation, all envy and pride, all indolence and indifference, all hardness and perturbation, all sadness and distrust, all wickedness and deceit, all turpitude and diabolic influence, alike from a man or a woman, from a youth or an old man, from a rich or a poor man, because Christ died to heal all men and to cleanse all men from sin.”\*

History can bear witness that in the middle ages, to every profession and mode of life there was a supernatural standard proposed, and that unless sanctified and directed by a divine motive, no state or employment was deemed secure from a fatal end. Giles of Colonna shows, that in the government of himself, and of his family, and of his kingdom, a king must not place his happiness in pleasure or riches, or honor, or glory, or fame, or civil power, for then he would be only superficially good ; but that he must place it in the love of God, and in works which are the proofs of love.† “We entreat our Saviour, in whose name we are here assembled,” says Alexander, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Telesi, in the kingdom of Naples to king Roger, “that he may cause you so to govern your kingdom that you may hereafter possess the eternal kingdom. For what did it profit Saul to possess the temporal kingdom by divine will, when afterwards he lost both ; or what the Roman emperors Augustus and Domitian, and others, to have reigned over the universal world ? That you may avoid such an end, magnify and serve God, and study to please him, and if it be asked in what manner a king should govern so as to please God, we answer, a nation is rightly and well administered, when by the force of law all wickedness is expelled. Remember that you bear the name of king in order that all under your dominion may be governed with the censure of justice in the bond of peace. Therefore be prudent, brave, and invincible. Moreover, with all vows we entreat you to be mindful of your condition, to have in your mind the Lord your Creator, to know that he is your king, who is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, in whose hands are all the ends of the earth, who alone is to be feared and adored, in whom we live, and move, and from whose bounty you have all that you possess. In the Gospel, Truth saith to his disciples, ‘Sine me nihil potestis facere’ ; and if we must believe that the disciples Peter and Paul, Andrew, and the other apostles, without him could do nothing, how much more all we who in comparison with them are as nothing ! Let not, then, thy heart be ever lifted up like the king of Babylon, but remember David the holy king, and imitate him, who was lowly in his own eyes, who though possessed of the kingdom of Israel, without contradiction, danced before the ark of the Lord. Follow this humility, that with David you may pass from a kingdom to a kingdom, and from an empire which ends with time, may be removed to that heavenly empire in which, with Jesus Christ our Lord, you may deserve to reign for evermore.”‡

\* Sermonum III. Pars 7.

† Ægid. Romanus de Regim. Princ. P. I. Lib. I.

‡ Alexand. Abb. de Rebus Gest. Rogerii.

To this representation of the kingly office in the twelfth century the type of every other condition was analogous. In no state were mere natural virtues or natural motives deemed sufficient. "What hope have merchants?" asks the disciple in a dialogue ascribed to St. Anselm. The master replies, "Small; for by fraud and perjury they acquire the greatest part of what they gain. Do they not frequently visit holy places and give great alms? They do all this in order that God may increase their goods, and that they may preserve them, and in these they have their reward; for of such men it is said, *qui confidunt in multitudine divitiarum suarum*. Like sheep they shall be brought down, and death shall feed upon them. What do you think of various artificers? Looking at the difficulties of their state, he replies, nearly all perish, for they work iniquity. Have players and jesters hope? None: for with intention they are ministers of Satan. Of them it is said, *Deum non cognoverunt: Deus sprexit eos*. The number of the saved will be few, but yet Christ will gather his elect from men of all classes, as he hath already assumed some from amongst thieves." What more legitimate in nature's eye than the pursuit of pleasure, if it can be obtained without injuring others? Yet the justice of the Catholic discipline was not satisfied with that limitation, for cupidity was defined by Raban Maur to be the desire of enjoying any thing, not on account of God.\*

It is related of Atticus, that his humanity and goodness did not spring from nature alone, which we all obey, but also from learning. "He did these things," says a Roman author, "not alone through nature, but also from principle; for he had so imbibed the principles of the chief philosophers, that he made use of them to direct his life, and not for the sake of ostentation. He was a great imitator of the manners of his ancestors, and a lover of antiquity, which he understood thoroughly and explained in several books, than which nothing can be sweeter to those who have any desire of being acquainted with illustrious men." Making the proper substitutions, we may say it was thus with Catholic manners in the ages of faith. The force of traditionary duties and modes of life was felt in every rank of society, so that few could wholly resist it. While it was the object of legislators to establish a harmony between the moral destiny of man and his social condition, it was felt as the honor of families to transmit from generation to generation, rules and customs, and manners corresponding to the doctrines and spirit of the Catholic Church. Let us hope that the justice and propriety which belong to the genuine manners of a Catholic state, which are of custom, not of invention, social not individual, may never be worn out and forgotten amongst us, that in our cities some few aged ones may even still be found in whom the old time chides the new. It is not by a written law or private speculation that early hours, assiduity in the church morning and evening, simplicity and peace in all the detail of domestic life, personal familiarity with the poor, catholicity in conversation and

\* Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum Lib. III. cap. 13.

habits of living, such as we find it in countries where it is generally diffused, can be enforced. It is by the tradition of families and the force of common opinion and example. Reader, this wish will be for yourself and for all that can make life dear to you; for after having once had experience of the supernatural manners of Catholic society, would it not be tearful, like being ejected from Paradise, and commanded to wander over a land of malediction, to be obliged to return to the cold, monotonous and uninspiring formalities of naturalism or of rationalism, as in countries which have lost faith, and to join that society in which, as its wise poet complains,—

———“ To-morrow unbelied may say,  
I come to open out for fresh display,  
The elastic vanities of yesterday : ”\*

which knows of no morning sacrifice, no holy nights, no calm retreats from the world, no evening meditations in solemn churches, no smiling salutations like those of the Spaniards on entering a house, who used to begin by saying, “ Ave Maria purissima,” no union of the visible and invisible in customs and views of action, no sanctification of hours, or of enjoyments, of the duties and of the regrets of life? When the sound of the bell which precedes the blessed sacrament was heard within the theatres of Madrid, spectators and actors all without exception, used to fall upon their knees. Bourgoign, who mentions this, adds, “ that it is difficult not to laugh.” Unhappy the man, unhappy, if it were only because the whole type in his intelligence must be contrary to that which yields pure joy to the human heart, who at such a spectacle has smiles and disdain to hide instead of tears, and the sudden movements of veneration and love.

The supernatural character of the Catholic morality was also seen in the motives which prompted it; and here one might remark how little progress has been made in judicial virtue since the days when the duties of the Christian magistrate were taught by a Capuchin friar, Ives of Paris. We find that men of the middle ages were continually referring to religion for the cause even of political actions. When Guillaume de Villardouin was made prisoner by the emperor Michael Paleologus, he was offered his freedom, and money to purchase lands in France, if he would renounce his principality of the Morea. William at first proceeded to show that the feudal system did not leave it in his power to compromise the rights of others, but finally he was induced, after a long imprisonment, to yield three towns to the emperor. The Franks, however, in the Morea, met in general assembly, refused to ratify the cession. The duke of Athens in a noble speech, offered to become a prisoner in the place of William, but protested against surrendering the bulwarks of the Morea. “ I deplore his captivity,” said he, “ but such a price for his liberty would endanger the liberty of the whole people.”

\* Wordsworth.



In conclusion he used these impressive words in reference to the example of Christ. "The supreme justice does not will that all should be sacrificed for the safety of one, but rather that one for all should perish." The security and perseverance of the Catholic justice was another proof that it was above nature. How many men are thought to be meek merely from their being insensible to the divine honor, and untried in what regards themselves. To the false meek, to those who are only by nature moderate and pacific, St. Bernardine of Sienna applies the prophet's words, "Tange montes, et fumigabunt." Only oppose their own will, and the least contradiction will raise a tempest where you thought had reigned a perpetual serenity. "O, what a precious good is endurance," cries Marsilius Ficinus in his letter to John Cavalcanti. "This alone made Socrates the wisest of the Greeks: this is obtained by that view and remembrance of divine and eternal things, which renders all the glory of the world vain and vile." But in nothing does the supernaturalism of the Catholic morals appear more eminent than in their opposition to the sensual ideal, which, no doubt, furnishes the true explanation of the cause of that mortal hate otherwise unaccountable, with which the holy Church of God has been always regarded by the profane. "The opposition of body and soul," as Novalis observes, "is one of the most remarkable and dangerous things. In history it has played a great part."\* "All men," he adds, "are engaged in a perpetual duel."† "There is a separation," as Frederick Schlegel remarks, "not merely between ourselves and the external world, but there is a division also within ourselves and in our inmost nature, a separation of conscience from thought. This pervades the whole of human life, both states and families, in faith and knowledge, judgment and inclinations, reason and will, reason and fancy."‡ How clearly men illuminated by holiness in the middle ages, had discerned what this philosopher speaks of, may be witnessed in the dialogue between Reason and Conscience, which Jacoponus inserts among his sublime rhapsodies.§ Neither were the ancients blind to this phenomenon. The Pythagoreans used to speak of a double form of human nature inherent from generation, as if there were another animal joined to it, and hence a constant contention within ourselves.|| "Of all victories," says Clinias in Plato, "the first and best is the conquering one's self; and the most disgraceful and miserable defeat is the being conquered by one's self."¶

"Tu si animum vicisti, potius quam animus te,  
est quod gaudeas.

Qui animum vincunt, quam quos animus, semper  
probiores client."

So speaks Plautus.\*\*

\* Schriften. II. 314.

† Id. II. 284.

‡ Philosophie der Sprache, 23.

§ Wadding, Annal. Minorum, tom. VI. p. 83.

|| Jamblich. Adhortat. ad Philosoph. cap. 3.

¶ Plato de Legibus, I.

\*\* Trinum. II, 2.

Cicero says, "reliquum est ut tute tibi imperes : quamquam hoc nescio quo modo dicatur, quasi duo simus ut alter imperet, alter pareat, non inscite tamen dicitur."\* Frederick Schlegel illustrates his position by referring to the dramatic development and representation of thought in the works of Plato, which has so completely assumed the conversational form, that if the superscription and name of the persons, all address and reply, and in general, the colloquial form, were suppressed, the whole would nevertheless remain a dialogue, in which every answer suggests a new question flowing on in an alternate living stream of discourse and reply, or rather of thought and counter thought. This internal conversational form is essential to all living thought and to its delivery, so that the connected, uninterrupted discourse of one individual may be assumed as a conversation.† If we follow this dialogue with attention, we shall discover that as far as the sphere of morals is implicated, the two contending parties which agitate the external world are duly represented within ourselves. In fact they are found playing the same part, taking and retaking castles, professing war or treacherous neutrality, overthrowing or restoring thrones within the little world of each man's soul. In this spiritual contest they of the holy discipline are all like the Greeks of Homer.

*οἶδιν ἄρα Ζεὺς  
ἐκ νεότητος ἔδωκε καὶ ἐς γῆρας πολυπεύειν  
ἀργαλέους πολέμους.‡*

The regard which the Romans entertained for chastity appears in the laws relative to the sanctuary of Fortuna Muliebris.

"In the pagan rites," says St. Augustin, "it is said there were, I know not what whispers breathed into the ears of a few and delivered as a secret religion, that chastity and probity of life should be pursued.§ When and where," he adds, "they heard the precepts of sacred celestial chastity we know not."|| The Greek poet styles chastity "the most beautiful gift of the gods."

*στέργοι δέ με σωφροσύνα,  
δώρημα κάλλιστον θεῶν.¶*

But the Christian revelation threw a new light upon the mysteries of our moral nature. "Although," says St. Augustin, "there are so many different nations on the earth, living according to different rites and manners, and distinguished by variety of languages, arms, and habits, yet there are not more than two races of human society existing, which we may call two cities; the one consisting of men who live after the flesh, and the other of those who live after the spirit."\*\*

The passions, indeed, given to us with life, as long as they remain pure and unabused, are under the protection of angels; but no light unearthly is required

\* Tuscul. II. 20.      † Id. 60.      ‡ II. XIV. 85.      § De Civit. Dei, Lib. II. 6.  
|| II. 26.      ¶ Eurip. Medea, 635.      \*\* De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIV. cap. I.

to show that when corrupted or misdirected, they are subjected to the empire of dæmons, and made the ready instruments of every error and vanity that oppose themselves to justice. Thus reason suffices to teach that there is a virtuous love, and a guilty love, a pernicious anger, and a holy anger, a criminal pride and a noble sense of dignity. But those whom Christ had repaired by the new light of his immortality could see farther. The flight of Christian souls was higher still; for that belief in millions of spiritual creatures walking the earth unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep, those images, those chants, those crowns, and reliquaries guarding the soul from the poisoned shafts of the impure dæmon, as if with a buckler of diamonds, that cleanness of heart which suggests that revolted spirits must seem to resemble even in shape and outward signs their sin and place of doom obscure and foul, that affirmation of the prophet, "ye are gods, and all sons of the Most High," that maxim of the bright school, "Christianus alter Christus," without doubt produced an ideal of humanity corresponding to what was in the mind of God rather than to what was in the mind of man. Men of genius like Sir Philip Sidney, who set themselves, as in his letter to Queen Elizabeth, "against papists," indulged their imagination in the absence of the beauties of the angelic life, by forming the ideal of sensual excellence, as may be witnessed in his essay, entitled, "Valour Anatomized." This has always been and must ever continue the policy of those who attack the Catholic religion. Material is thus opposed to spiritual beauty, though the first is indebted to the latter for the attraction which it uses as a snare. As Novalis remarks, "the ideal of morality has no more dangerous rival than the ideal of the highest strength of the most powerful life, which is also termed the ideal of greatness. It is the maximum of barbarism:" so foreign to the spirit of the middle ages, that a great guide of the thirteenth century declared it more detestable to be intemperate than timid:\* "but in these times of irregular cultivation, it has many adherents even amidst the utmost weakness. Through this ideal man would acquire a brute spirit and a brute intelligence."† Through this every thing belonging to the holy discipline of faith is seen in a distorted shape; "O mortal lust! thou canst not lift thy head above the waves which whelm and sink thee down."‡ At present the ideal of humanity in the whole development of human genius is animal, in the ages of faith it was angelical, and this of itself is quite sufficient to explain the difference between the manners and creations of the middle ages, and those of the modern civilization; for the great heresy of latter times has been a gross application to manners of the principle of Jordano Bruno, who inculcated the identification of God with nature, that is, with nature in its present state. Many of the faithful seem not to be aware that if they consider their own ideal by the light of unimpassioned reason, and even by that of the ancient philosophy, they would find it amply justified. Novalis, whose remarkable writing may be

\* Œgid. Rom. de Regim. II. I. 16.

† Schriften, II. 285.

‡ Dante, Hell, XXVII.



said to represent the testimony of the human intelligence, says, "We must keep the body as well as the soul in our power. The body is the instrument to form and modify the world; we must seek to form our body to all capacities. Modification of this is the modification of the world."\* The Pythagoreans were exhorted to beware of pleasure as of a thing requiring the utmost caution, the source and instigator of all deceit and sin.† Aristotle said, that "it is brutish to indulge in delight and sensual pleasures, and that the most generous natures voluntarily refrain from them."‡ He shows that the grand object of virtue is to resist pleasure, since it is still more difficult to fight against pleasure than against anger, according to Heraclitus *περὶ δὲ τὸ χαλεπώτερον αἰεὶ καὶ τέχνη γίνεται καὶ ἀρετή.*§

From the works of Plato a sublime defence might be derived for those features of Catholic morals which seem most repugnant to the feelings of flesh and blood. Socrates, in that magnificent passage at the end of the *Gorgias*, where he describes the punishment of the wicked after death, says, "that the souls which have been defiled with lust and avarice, will then appear horribly disfigured, as if with great scars and wounds which these vile passions had left imprinted on them."|| Dionysius praises the manners of the first Romans on account of their abstemious life, being hardened against all enjoyment of pleasure; and for their having estimated happiness by virtue not by fortune.¶ In expressing his admiration for Romulus, observing how austere he was, and how he hated all crime, he concludes with this remarkable expression, *καὶ πολλὴν ἔχουσα πρὸς τοὺς ἡρώϊκους βίους ὁμοιότητα.*\*\* In fact, according to Pindar it was the boast of Achilles, the type of heroism, that he had been imbued with the learning of Chiron, and that he had passed the first twenty years of his life in a cave, where he was educated by the chaste daughters of the centaur, to whom he never even uttered an unseemly word.††

Without doubt the heathen moralist in general knew little of that trial to which Hugo of St. Victor alludes, when he says that youth has to bear the burden and heat of the day, materially the weight of labor and heat of the sun, and morally the weight of carnal fragility and heat of concupiscence.‡‡ Yet Euripides, in drawing the character of Hippolytus, furnished proof that the Greeks were capable of conceiving the beauty of such a character as that of a young man wholly innocent, unwilling to pollute his ears or eyes with any thing against modesty, *παρθένον ψυχὴν ἔχων.*§§ Nay, how well they understood the importance of guarding the senses with a view to the preservation of such virtue, may be collected from the double signification of the word *κόρη* with the Greeks, and the alliance between *pupillæ* and *pupulæ* with the Latins. We, indeed, have abundant testimonies from ancient authors, to the excellence of many of the supernatural features of

\* *Schriften*, II. 157.

† *Ethic. Nic. Lib. III. cap. 10.*

‡ *Antiquit. Roman. Lib. II. c. II.*

‡‡ *De Claustro Animæ, Lib. II. 14.*

† *Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 31.*

§ *Id. Lib. II. 3.*

\*\* *II. c. 24.*

§§ 1006.

|| *Plato, Georgias.*

†† *Id. Pyth. Od. IV.*

Catholic manners during the ages of faith. Cicero, after alluding to the internal division which involves the necessity of self government, adds, "*Est in animis omnium fere natura molle quiddam, demissum, humile, enervatum, quodammodo et languidum, senile. Si nihil aliud, nihil esset homine deformius.*"\* And yet this is what the modern sophists would teach youth to follow! "*Arrianus Maturius est princeps,*" says Pliny, "*quum dico Princeps, non de facultatibus loquor, sed de castitate, justitia, gravitate, prudentia.*"† The ancient philosophers even admit expressly the necessity of placing morals upon a supernatural basis, and of imparting motives to action higher than the mere principles of humanity. Varro thought it useful that brave men should fancy themselves sprung from the gods. "The human mind," he said, "in consequence of that persuasion, would undertake greater things, pursue them with more ardor, and perfect them with greater felicity." We no where meet with an idea of morality independent of sacrifice and the fear of the Deity. Hermippus says that Chiron the Centaur first led the race of mortals to justice, teaching them oaths and propitiatory sacrifices.

It is a singular fact, that even for the institution of confession, apparently so beyond mortal ken, there might be testimonies produced from some of the ancient philosophers. Plato enforces the duty of disclosing one's sin and injustice to others; and Plutarch speaks as follows, in his treatise entitled, "*How to perceive one's Progress in Virtue.*" "As for those who voluntarily give themselves up to the men that will reprove them, who confess their errors, and who disclose their own poverty, not being at ease until it be known, not wishing to be secret, but confessing and praying those who reprove and admonish them to prescribe a remedy, such a conduct is certainly not one of the worst signs of amendment and of progress in virtue."

To this divine principle, which produced such an influence on Catholic manners, our attention must now be directed, which is an inquiry that will not lead us aside from the path of an historian; for the learned Scotti, in his *Theory of Christian Politics*, remarks justly, that it is often necessary for a writer on civil government to enter upon doctrinal discussions, as in the very instance which calls for that observation, where he shows the utility which the state derives from the doctrines of purgatory and indulgence. There is no historian of Charles the Fifth, who has not been obliged to notice the curious petition of his Lutheran subjects, that by his imperial authority men might be compelled to return to the ancient discipline of confession, when experience has taught them that its abolition produced a visible deterioration in morals, and opened a prospect of interminable evils to society. To this point now, reader, let us therefore turn, and mark how just God decrees our debts to be cancelled.

\* *Tuscul. II.*† *Epist. Lib. III. 2*

## CHAPTER VIII.

**I**N the symbol of our faith, immediately after the commemoration of the holy church, we find mention made of the remission of sins, because, as St. Augustin says, "it is only in fact by means of the remission of sins, that the church on earth can subsist."\* Christ instituted the sacrament of penitential confession, and gave to men a power which belonged not to the angels, and which equalled his own, saying, "As my Father sendeth me, so send I you; whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you retain, they are retained;" words, which though never interpreted but in one sense by the Catholic church, have visibly embarrassed the great writers of other schools from whose commentaries no one can ascertain what they thought respecting them, and who probably, indeed, had not a clear idea themselves of what they would maintain. The Catholic church, as the Master of the Sentences says, has always claimed and exercised the power of binding and loosing, which power is permitted to priests alone. "Rightly," saith he, "does the church which has true priests, claim this authority, but heresy cannot claim it, which has not true priests."† Some have questioned the nature and method of confession in the primitive church, but it is clear from St. Cyprian, that men then confessed their thoughts.‡ Minucius Felix, addressing the idolaters, says, "apud nos et cogitare peccare est; vos, conscios timetis, nos etiam conscientiam solam, sine qua esse non possumus." It appears also that converts from heresy, like the old hermit Isidore, in the early church, used to confess the horrible secret sacrileges which they committed against the blessed sacrament.§ "Grave vulnus est," says St. Augustin, "lethale, mortiferum; sed omnipotens medicus."|| "No one," says Origen, "must blush to indicate his sin to the priest of the Lord, and to seek the medicine."¶

"What doth it signify," says St. Ambrose, "whether by penitence or by the washing of baptism, the priests vindicate this right granted to them? it is one and the same mystery in both, for the name of God worketh in penitence, as the grace of mysteries in baptism."\*\* St. Cyprian speaks of every one confessing his sins to the priests;†† but after the fourth Council of Lateran, confession became more frequent among the faithful, and chiefly by means of the exhortation of the \*

\* Enchirid. cap. XVII. † Lib. IV. Sentent. distinct. 18. 19.

‡ Tract. de Lapsis.

§ Sophronii Pratum Spirit. cap. XXX.

|| Sermon. CCCLII.

¶ Hom. II. in Levit.

\*\* Lib. I. de Penitentia, cap. 8.

†† De Lapsis, XII.



regular clergy. When Dante was at Ravenna, the laity were admonished by the decrees of Rainaldo the archbishop, to have recourse to the sacraments at least on eight festivals in the year,\* but this was merely fixing a minimum, to ascertain who were worthy of the name of Christians. When the number of confessors was increased, it became expedient to compile books for their guidance, such as the Confessional of St. Bonaventura, and the sum of St. Raymond of Pennafert; though these were not altogether a novelty, for penitentials of the highest antiquity may be found in various collections. By means of these works the priest, without being obliged to recur to the canons, had every where a sure rule for his conduct in the important action of imposing the penance appropriate to each sin. The moderns, in condemning books of this kind, had against them even their own most esteemed authority. "I commend much," says Lord Bacon, "the deducing of the law of God to cases of conscience."†

St. Raymond the Dominican, in the thirteenth century, may upon the whole be considered as author of the first sum of moral theology. His work was excellent, but in subsequent times, many writers who undertook to form similar collections, treated the subject in such a manner as to provoke the censures of the church. Mabillon scrupled not to prefer to some of them the book of Cicero de Officiis.‡ In this, however, he referred to obscure compilations, for the accusations which a celebrated philosopher adduced against some of the noblest and most perfect treatises, were ungrounded and calumnious.

The Pere Daniel, in reply to the provincial letters, has convicted Paschal of having falsified the text of the authors which he quoted, of having ascribed to them the opinions which they proposed only for the purpose of refutation, and of having condemned as novelties the doctrines of the holy father and of the Scripture. Assuredly such men as Azor, Suarez, Vasquez, Lessius, and Sanchez, needed not the light of Port Royal to reject the atrocious errors which he denounced with such eloquence.§ The Marchioness of Sablé, who was then encompassed by it, asked Paschal on one occasion, if in reality he was sure that all he had written against the Jesuits was just? To whom he replied, "That it was for those who furnished him with the memoranda on which he worked to examine that point, and not for him who did nothing but arrange the materials which were placed in his hands." This is that sage sublime, the renown of whose great name hath echoed through the world, as if through his lips justice had once a voice on earth. Now, let his disciples say whether he needeth nothing but their praise.

Of public penance, there are memorable examples in history. Pope Fabian closed the church doors against the emperor Philip, as did St. Martin against the Emperor Maximus, St. Ambrose against Theodosius, and St. Germain against

\* Hieron. Rubei Hist. Raven Lib. VI.

‡ De Studiis Monast. Pars. II. cap. VII.

† Advancement of Learning.

§ Entretiens d'Eudoxe et de Cleandre.

King Aribert, until they were reconciled and made public confession. Louis le Debonnaire asked permission to perform public penance. It was then for the first time since the early examples, that one saw the great spectacle of the voluntary humiliation of a man invested with the supreme power. "This," says Michelet, "was a new era of morality, the accession of conscience." Nevertheless, the brutal pride of men blushed for royalty at the humble confession which it made of its own weakness; \* and there have not been wanting historians in modern times to convert such examples, and, indeed, the whole discipline of penitence, into ground for accusing the clergy of tyranny and pride, forgetting the obvious truth which Plato develops, that it is not consistent with nature that the pilot of a ship should ask the consent of the sailors to be directed by them, nor that the wise should go to the door of the rich. And he who can deliver such conceits, adds the great philosopher, lies; but nature commands that if a rich or a poor man be sick, that he should go to the door of the physician; and, in like manner, whatever is to be directed, must apply to those who are able to direct.†

Already, in another book, having spoken of the penitential exercises observed during the ages of faith, there is no occasion to dwell at present on the historical view of this subject; let us pass on, therefore, to philosophize briefly respecting the advantages of this institution, and to consider the objections to which it has given rise.

What is the state of man?—a wayfarer on earth, a member of the Militant church, left with liberty, called to perfection, encompassed with obstacles, and having a twofold evil to combat? What is the probability of his obtaining that prize which is for the few who conquer, and of his being admitted to those regions of purity and imperishable joy in which nothing that is defiled can ever enter? Let us hear the axiom of the middle ages, "Quidquid fit contra conscientiam ædificat ad gehennam."‡ Yet St. Augustin makes a reflection still more appalling than this of Innocent. "Væ peccatis hominum," he exclaims, "qui sola inusitata exhorrescimus, usitata vero, pro quibus abluendis Filii Dei sanguis effusus est, quamvis tam magna sint, ut omnino claudi contra sese faciant regnum Dei, sæpe videndo omnia tolerare, sæpe tolerando nonnulla etiam facere cogimur."§

St. Clemens Alexandrinus quotes an ancient poet, saying,

ὁ βίος ἀνθρώποις λογισμοῦ κάρθιμοῦ δεῖται πάνν·  
ζῶμεν ἀριθμῶν καὶ λογισμῶν· ταῦτα γὰρ σώζει βροτούς.

and, again, what is more remarkable from a Gentile,

οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος τέχνην εὖρ', ὁ δὲ θεὸς ταύταν φέρει  
ὁ δέ γε τάνθρώπου λόγος πέφυκ' ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου λόγου.]

\* Hist de France. I. 362.

† De Repub. Lib. VI.

‡ Innocent III. in cap. litteras de Rest. Spol. § Enchirid. cap. 70. || Stromat. Lib. V. 14.

It is even so. "Man has not judgment to direct his life," as Richard of St. Victor saith. "The quality of works deceives him, as when the prophet says, 'Væ qui dicitis bonum malum et malum bonum.' And he errs also in his estimate of quantity, to which the Psalmist alludes, when he saith, 'Mendaces filii hominum in stateris, ut decipiant ipsi de vanitate in id ipsum.' Who will find me a man that never errs in his estimate of quality or of quantity, who is never circumvented by the occupation—walking in darkness? Who neither wishes to be deceived nor to deceive? But where can man attain to this degree of judgment, while involved in darkness and dwelling in the region of the shadow of death? Truly this is impossible for every man, so long as the darkness rests on the face of the abyss, until He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, emitting his light and truth, shall begin to divide light from darkness, and to make evening and morning, in order that man may be able to discern good from evil, and evil from good, good from better, and evil from worse, better from best, and worse from worst? Without supernatural help men cannot make 'the first step in the way of discretion,' which is to judge between day and night, that is, between good and evil. How, without a personal and authoritative application of the unerring text made through the sacrament of penance, can they hope to make the second, between night and night, or worse and evil, worse and worst; the third, between day and day, this is, between good and better, better and best; the fourth, which is to judge every night or to know what is each sin; and the fifth, which is to judge every day, or to estimate justly every virtue?"\* "Every hour," continues this great philosopher, "yea, each moment we are deceived in our estimation of things, and breaking the reins of equity we run loose of our desires. No moderation, no certain measure is preserved, while the mind is impelled to and fro, as in a whirlwind, by the impulse of the flesh. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness. Happy the time, and desirable the hour, when no longer will any thought be deceived in its examination, any affection bridled in its desires."†

Against the dangers of this state of man, exposed to the impulse of his own heart and to the action of an external seducer, the Catholic church has been provided with a remedy in the sacrament of confession, by which men are not alone loosed but directed and advised. The priest had a judicial power supernatural, but, besides that, he was in a position from which he could determine what was best for the penitent, who for himself might never have been able to determine with justice, since his mind would still be a mirror that reflected only himself. Always provided with a certain, positive rule of judging, the priest had a knowledge of human nature, beyond what could be possessed by other men.

"Often too,  
Through the long experience of his days,

\* Richardi S. Victoris de Statu Interioris Hominis, Lib. I. 1. c. 25, 26.

† Id. I. 1. c. 34



Which had in many fortunes tossed beene,  
 And past through many perillous assayes,  
 He knew the diverse went of mortall wayes  
 And in the mindes of men had great insight;  
 Which with sage counsell, when they went astray  
 He could enforme, and them reduce aright  
 And all the passions heale, which wound the weaker spright.”\*

Will you hear those who speak from experience? “Woe to the man,” cries Silvio Pellico, “who rejects confession, and who in order not to appear vulgar, thinks himself obliged to treat it with sarcasm. Is it not true, you ask, that as every one says, one ought to be good, it is useless to hear it repeated without ceasing? that meditation and reading suffice to the wants of the soul? No; the burning word of man has a power which neither reading nor meditation possess. The soul is more moved by it, the impressions from it are more profound. The voice of a brother hath a life and an applicability to the moment which we do not find either in our own thoughts, or in our books.”† You find this mystery explained in the old verses of Alanus de Insulis—

“Diversis diversa valent medicamina morbis:  
 Ut variant morbi, sic variantur ea.  
 Non uno doctrina modo se mentibus infert;  
 His timor, his monitis, his adhibetur amor.”

Spenser paints the spiritual physician in the act of administering to the diseased soul:

“Then gan the palmer thus, ‘most wretched man  
 That to affection does the bridle lend:  
 In their beginning they are weak and wan,  
 But soone, through suff’rance, growe to fearefull end,  
 Whiles they are weake, betimes with them contend.’”‡

But what is to be said of that examination of the heart, and of that scrutiny of secret sins, which the practice of confession implied, and which the moderns represent as injurious to the freshness and purity of the mind? There are not wanting books to enable us to determine this question practically;§ but in relation to history, we can best answer it from consulting the writers of the middle ages. Hugo of St. Victor, developing that every man is in Egypt by the consideration of himself, in the land of Israel by the contemplation of God, and in Judea by the edification of his neighbor, says, “it is useful to fly into Egypt, and behold the darkness of our infirmity, that the mind may not swell. And if the child Jesus, and his Virgin Mother be with us, the darkness will not overwhelm us; but though we should walk through the midst of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evils. Let us fly, then, into Egypt, and remain there till the death

\* Spenser, VI. 6.

† Le Mie Prigioni, cap. LXXXIV.

‡ Book II. 4.

§ Vide Drexelii Trismegistus Christianus, de Cultu Conscientiæ.

of Herod, till the end of our pride and our elation.”\* How great is the inconsistency of men! Those who object to the scrutiny of the heart in the secrets of confession, as a means of advancing to perfection, are generally the very persons who are addicted to resting in that view of themselves, without any farther object than to indulge in the vain pleasure or the sullen discontent inspired by what they find there. This was a weakness and a danger foreign from the Catholic morality. Under its influence men did not write books to paint themselves, in order that their image might be then admired and adored by others. God only was to be adored in the heart of man.† Even for good they did not rest in self-contemplations. “Return to yourself,” says Richard of St. Victor, “and keep your heart; but woe to you, if you remain there, instead of passing on to seek the highest good, which is God. Pass on; despise yourself, and you will realize the departure of Israel out of Egypt.”‡

The human heart is an abyss of mystery, if you will only credit Homer, who, says, “Many things obscure, Thestorides, but nought obscurer than the mind of man;”§ and what dangers arise from it no one need be told. We have to contend not only against the passions of the body, but also against those of the mind. “In libidine esse, peccatum est etiam sine effectu.” This is what even the Gentile moralist affirmed.|| “The first study of a manly mind,” says Richard of St. Victor, “ought to be how to govern its affections; and the second, how to command its thoughts.”¶ “Who can worthily apprehend,” he continues, “who can sufficiently estimate, who does not tremble with awe and admiration, when he considers that multiplex volubility of human thought, that restless and unwearied velocity which traverses so many, so various, such infinite things, which rests no hour, no moment of time, which flies with such haste through so much space of locality and of ages, to which every where opens so easy a passage from the highest to the lowest, from the lowest to the highest, from first to last, and from last to first?”\*\* What need of a wise, and steady, and active personal direction, and what a school of wisdom may the mind be made, which is the seat of such admirable faculties? “The mind,” says Richard of St. Victor, “knows nothing better, nothing more certain, nothing more sublime, than what it learns by experience, and perhaps this is the proper and especial, and above all, most sublime mode of learning, in the power of the soul, when we prove a thing by our own experience.”†† Hear how these men prescribed: “There comes into your mind,” says St. Augustin, “an unlawful suggestion? It is the serpent’s head:

\*Hugo S. Vict. ex Miscellan. Liv. III. 60.

† Malebranche, Recherche de la Verité, Liv. II. c. 5.

‡ Richardi S. Victoris de Exterminatione Mali, Pars I. Tract. I. 6.

§ Epig. VI.

|| Cicero, de Finibus, Lib. III. 9

¶ Richard. S. Vict. de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. c. 2.

\*\* Richardi S. Victoris, de Contemplatione, L. III. c. 21.

†† De Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. c. 2.

tread on it, and you will escape. But it speaks of gain, great gain, much gold : you will be rich for ever ! It is the serpent's head : tread on it. Perish the world's gain, rather than that a soul be lost."\* This is what St. Benedict in his rule expresses, by dashing evil thoughts in their commencement against the rock which is Christ, according to the prophetic admonition of the Psalmist. "Again," saith Hugo of St. Victor, "many seek science, but few conscience ; yet if they would seek conscience with as much study and solicitude as they do secular and vain science, it would be sooner acquired, and more usefully retained ; for to think with conscience is consummate sense, and saving the reverence of wisdom, it is more useful to have recourse to conscience than to wisdom, unless it be that wisdom which builds up the conscience."† That a thousand difficulties and objections, a thousand sources of bitter disgust and alienation are removed by confession, is a fact well known to the physicians of souls, who have experience of the maladies of the human intelligence. It is sin which raises all these clouds. Men have wondered at the sacred history which records that man fell for an apple. Blind and thoughtless : they read the same record, however humiliating, in their own hearts. Such is still the degradation of this marvellous piece of workmanship—man ! He falls daily for an apple, even so, for a little sugar, for a little sugar and blood. Attend to the order and progress of human perdition ; it is the Master of the Sentences who speaks : "First God said, 'in the day that you shall eat of it, you shall die the death.' Then the woman said, 'lest perchance we die.' Lastly, the serpent said, 'ye shall not die.' God affirmed ; the woman doubted ; the devil denied ; finally, the man, in compliance with Eve, consented. Now in each man continually the order and progress of temptation is the same as in the case of our first parents, and similar is the result when reason, which ought to command with authority, consents to the suggestions of passions which ought to obey, and decrees that to be done which they advise ; for then the man is expelled from all happy life, from the paradise of his mind, as if from that terrestrial garden in which he was first placed by his Maker."‡ But you will say, once instructed, what need of having these personal admonitions repeated, as the practice of frequent confession implies ? For answer to this question, hear what St. Anselm says. "The devil is like a deceitful pleader, who gives false witness in court, and when rejected, returns again, after a time, with the same, pretending to have been injured, till the judge declares what was once well determined cannot be revived again. Thus the devil pleads in the heart of man, to which place he comes as to a court, and there asserts that to be true which he knows to be false, and false that which is true ; for there he affirms it as a truth that a man ought to love the world, to seek riches and honor, to fulfil the desires of the flesh, all which is false. And on the other hand, he affirms it to be false that a man should leave

\* St. August. in Ps. 103.

† Hugo S. Victor, de Anima, Lib. III. cap. 10.

‡ Pet. Lomb. Lib. II. distinct. 24.



the world and despise riches and honors, and mortify the flesh, and redeem his sins with alms, all which is proved to be true. And when any one who knows how to judge between what is right and what is wrong, hears the devil in his heart say this, he determines that what he calls just is unjust, and the converse. And then the devil departs, but afterwards he hopes that the man will have forgotten his own decree, and he returns and revives the cause, as if it had not been rightly judged.”\*

How necessary, then, to have a counsellor and faithful fellow combatant ever at one's side, to confirm the soul in rejecting the deceitful things that may be now floating before the fatigued intelligence, and to remind it that what was once well determined ought never to be again revived. Above all, for youth in the season of so many mental and bodily passions, as Socrates says, *ὅταν δὴ περὶ αὐτὸν βομβοῦσαι καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι ἐπιθυμίαι*,† by means of what remembrance of mere general instruction can it resist? How indispensable is the teacher's high discourse, and the friendly admonitions of the sweet and holy friend, the physician of secret wounds, as St. John Climachus is styled—*vir sanctus oculorum vulnerum medicus*? for

—“ of such skill appliance needs  
To medicine the wounds that healeth last.”‡

Even in a mere political point of view, who can estimate the benefits that resulted to society from the influence of spiritual directors upon kings and men in civil authority? Take but one instance. When the duchess of Milan, on the death of her husband, and in the absence of her son, Galeazzo, neglected the counsels of her confessor, who was a minor friar, his superiors removed him, saying that it was in vain to send a physician to one who refused to follow his prescriptions. The duchess used every effort to have him restored, and when the vicar-general came to Milan, she prevailed on him to arrange the affair with the fathers, and in consequence a decree was issued in 1467, signed by the superiors of the province of Milan, and by the vicars of Bologna and Naples, granting to the said duchess brother Bonaventura de Pantanidis for her confessor, but on these conditions, that she should not suspend the execution of justice in civil causes, that she should diminish the superfluous expenses of her government, that she should satisfy her creditors yearly or daily, according to her ability, and that she should not oppose any obstacle to the succession of benefices.§

As yet we have seen but the need of prevention and of guidance to which this divine institution corresponds. It remains to view the cure and recovery.

“Although the human soul is immortal, it has nevertheless,” says St. Augustin, “a kind of death belonging to it. The death of the whole man, indeed, the

\* S. Anselmi di Similitudinibus, cap. 76.

† Dante, Purg. XXV.

‡ De Repub. Lib. IX.

§ Ann. Minorum, vol. XIII.

second death, does not take place till the soul, deserted by God, deserts the body, but the death of the soul takes place when God deserts it, as that of the body follows when deserted by the soul.”\*

At Florence in the days of the Medicis, the abbot Lumbo employed his skill in an admirable art, to represent the progressive stages of decomposition in the bodies of those who died of the pestilence. One turns pale if the eye catches but a momentary glance at that dreadful spectacle; but who could portray the different stages of corruption in the soul's death, or could survive a glance at it? Dante says of Satan,—

“If he were beautiful  
As he is hideous now, and yet did dare  
To scowl upon his Maker, well from him  
May all our mis'ry flow!”†

Profound words, that can teach us what effect might follow. I find this idea struck Marsilius Ficinus, for in his letter to Julian the Physician, he says that “if it were possible to behold the effigy of a wicked mind, one would fly from it with more speed and horror than from the sight of bodies that the plague had dispossessed of life.”‡ It is sufficient with the school to recognize the threefold character of moral death in relation to the three persons of the blessed Trinity, to know that he who falls through infirmity, as Richard of St. Victor says, “is greatly contrary to Him who is the highest power, the father; that he who sins through ignorance is opposed to him who is the highest wisdom, the Son; and that he who offends through sheer malice is the special adversary of Him who is the highest goodness, the Holy Ghost.”§

“Penance and that rite which first makes man Christian are styled the sacraments of the dead, because they transfer men from this state of death, to one of spiritual life. The mother of Naim, who was a widow, was overjoyed at her young son being raised to life again; and for men spiritually resuscitated, mother church rejoices daily.”|| This testimony of St. Augustin might be illustrated from the moralists and even historians of the middle ages, who attest the continued action of divine grace in the same mystery of resuscitating those that were dead in trespasses and sins. Hereafter we shall be able to remain for some space with these convertites. At present it will be sufficient to cast a glance upon some and pass on. St. Bernard received so much joy at the conversion of the knight Arnulphus, that he said publicly that Jesus Christ was no less admirable in the conversion of brother Arnulphus than in the resurrection of Lazarus, considering what bonds of vice and difficulties of the world he had to break through in order to embrace a holy life. The sentiments of men in the middle ages respecting conversion to justice are very profound. Of the difficulty attending it they seem impressed with a deeper sense than later moralists. “The heart,” says St. Gregory, “must

\* S. August. de Civitate Dei, Lib. XIII. c. 2.

† XXXIV.

‡ Epist. III.

§ Richardi S. Vict. de Eruditione Interioris Hominis, L. II. c. 3. || S. August. Hom. 44.

be moved from its place : the place of the human heart is the love of the world, but when touched by divine aspiration, its place becomes the love of eternity. By consideration of its eternal country, the soul is as it were moved from its place.”\* On the other hand they found that this supernatural change was often wrought by means of circumstances that appeared to mortal eye trifling and ignoble. “Vidi semen in terram de agricolæ manu negligenter lapsum, fructum lætissimum ac plurimum tulisse.” This is what St. John Climachus says, alluding to men who were converted by means of some apparently fortuitous event or unworthy motive. Salvation is of God, and he imparts it in diverse modes. “Vocat undique ad pœnitentiam, vocat beneficiis creaturæ, vocat impertiendo tempus vivendi, vocat per lectorem, vocat per tractatorem, vocat per intimam cogitationem, vocat per flagellum correptionis, vocat per misericordiam consolationis.”† Bernardine Gomesius, the Spanish historian, describing the tempest which befell the fleet of King James the First of Arragon, on the expedition against the Moors of Majorca, remarks, that “there is nothing more desirable than a storm at sea ; for it does good,” he says, “to souls, producing holy and salutary fruit of true and lively contrition, and that broken and contrite spirit which God doth never despise.”‡ A certain judge entered the order of St. Francis from hearing a light jest of one who said to a swine-herd that had great difficulty to make his swine enter a stable, “tell them to enter as judges and attorneys enter hell, and you will see how they will pass in quickly.” The blessed Torello de Castro Puppio, in Tuscany, when a licentious youth, was suddenly converted by means of a cock alighting from a window upon his shoulder and crowing thrice.§ And what think you were the fruits of these conversions ?

“When man,” says St. Hildegard, “returns to his Creator like the prodigal son, he renounces the dæmon and chooses his Lord. Then all the vices of the dæmon are confounded, and all celestial harmonies are admired.”|| It pleases the moderns to entertain doubts as to the possibility of having an exact knowledge of such transformations, though even the testimony of the Gentile philosophers is against them. “For my part,” says Plutarch, “I think that a man who should have been transformed by the gods into a woman like Cæneus, would be more ignorant of this metamorphose, than another on being rendered temperate and brave, being transported from a bestial to a heavenly and divine life, would be ignorant of the moment when this change was effected.”

During the middle ages it would seem as if the hearts of men were ever bent upon being employed as instruments to accomplish changes of this kind, and as if they continually meditated upon that sentence of Richard of St. Victor, “Timenda est hæc nox, in qua homo quotidie fit deterior et tamen de se securior.”¶

\* S. Greg. Moral. in Job XXVII.

† S. August. in Ps. 102.

‡ Bernardini Gomesii de Vita Jacobi I. Arragon. Lib. VI.

§ Wadding, Annal. Minorum, tom. IV. V.

|| Epist. ad Eberhard.

¶ Richardi S. Vict. in Cantic. Canticor. c. II.



Again and again are they warning friends and enemies against deferring such a work. Sometimes by terrible admonitions, saying, *Cras, cras, cras, to-morrow* . we shall amend, and answering, All our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death ; at others by tales horribly gay, which represent the subtilty of the victim practising with his own conscience, and with his guide, interpreting his promise to begin to-morrow, as always intended for a future day, till at length he is overtaken, and perishes in the moment when he is least aware. Their admonitions are always like those of Socrates to Ischomachus in Xenophon. "It is good to begin to follow virtue from this very day, when we hear for the first time what it really is."\* But grace must first be sought, for without it all man's efforts are in vain. The Church, indeed, to show the weakness of his nature, makes use of that expression in one of her sublime prayers. "*In hac mortalitate, te adjuvante, peccata sua defleant,*" implying that without divine aid he cannot so much as lament his sins with the tears of the elect. Nor are there wanting recitals full of terror to awaken the obdurate by revealing deep mysteries of Almighty grace. And of these I shall present one example, as it contains incidental evidence of the assiduity, of the rustic population, during the middle ages, to attend to their soul's health. "In the year 1464, a thing happened worthy of being known to posterity," says the historian of Croyland. "There was a man in the town of Croyland, named John Wayle, a day laborer. He committed some enormous crime which was known only to himself. When the holy season arrived in which the faithful people prepare to celebrate the Paschal feast by purifying themselves in the laver of pious confession, he went to the church along with the others through shame and not from a desire of confession. There admitted to the tribunal he concealed this deadly wound and went away uncleansed, and on the day of our Lord's resurrection, O grief ! he dared to receive the sacrament of reconciliation to the destruction of his own soul. Returning home he felt remorse, which increased during three days. till at length he was seized with horrible madness, as if possessed by *dæmons*. So the neighbors bound him in irons. The monks hastened to his assistance, and proceeded to read the office to him, but every time that the words of hope and salvation were pronounced, he fell into convulsions and uttered cries of despair. At length he was carried bound into the church, and a watch was set over him. Every one poured out prayers for him, and there was always some one or other of the monks who spoke consoling words to him, and promised a remedy for his mind, but he would make no answer, only through incessant clamor he was become hoarse and unable to speak much. At length he was observed to grow more gentle, and to make the sign of the cross. Examples of penitence were read to him, and he was exhorted to confession by every argument. There was one of the brethren who peculiarly devoted himself to save his soul, consoling him with secret counsels and private exhorta-

\* Xen. *Æconom.* cap. 11.

tions, and declaring to him that there was no crime so horrible in life but that it might be washed away by contrition and confession. Moreover, to win him he told him that if he would consent, he would willingly give his own soul a pledge for his. With such words the man was moved, and lo, signing himself, he declared that he was ready to confess. Unbound he was then led to the confessional, where at first he could only pour forth groans, but at length after repeated attempts, that brother still urging him, and going to him alone, by divine grace the string of his tongue was loosed, and he made his confession. Such was his joy and gratitude, that for seven days after he never left the church, but continued giving thanks to God. He changed his habitation to another place, but every succeeding year as long as he lived he used to visit Croyland, to give glory to God, and to thank blessed Mary and St. Guthlac.”\*

St. Bernard, in a letter to the abbot Suger, called upon him by every motive of religion and duty, to exert his influence with the Seneschal Stephen de Garlande, who was reputed to be his friend. “Give him then,” says he, “proofs of a solid friendship; labor for his conversion, and become by these means the friend of truth.”† The admonitory letter which Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluni, sent to the Lord Stephen de Castello, telling him that it was high time to think about saving his soul, is another noble example of this charitable solicitude of the increase of justice.‡ The blessed Manasses, bishop of Troyes, in the year 983, was not content with laboring for the sanctification of his flock and of his clergy to the neglect of his own family, who were powerful in the world. He had a brother Hilduin, count of Arcyes sur Aulbe, who led a military, carnal, voluptuous, and desperate life, which greatly afflicted the bishop. Hearing that the abbot Adson had a certain ascendancy over his soul, for he feared and respected him, he deputed him to associate as much as possible with this debauched soldier. Adson, who was never slow to labor for souls, was enabled by the divine grace to convert him, so that the insolent soldier and vicious libertine became a thorough penitent and a true gentleman. What a miracle was this! That a choleric count, murderous and cruel, should be changed into a mild, humane, peaceable gentleman, who undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to suffer for Jesus Christ.§ This zeal for conversions to justice was not confined to the clergy. We find it inspiring even poets. Laurent Desmoulins says that he wrote his book entitled the *Catholicon des Mal Advisez*—

“A celle fin que on advise à bien vivre  
Et amender sa vie dèsormais  
Sans offenser le Créateur jamais.”

“There are some,” says Guibert de Nogent, “who live well and continently,

\* Hist. Croylandensis Continuat. p. 539. in Rer. Anglic. Script. tom. I.

† S. Bernardi Epist. LXXVIII.

‡ S. Pet. Ven. Abb. Epist. Lib. V. 3.

§ Desguerrois Hist. du Diocese de Troyes, 244.

but who, because they have not a pastoral place in the church, think that they do not owe to their brethren a word of holy preaching, which is very absurd; for if by a dumb animal, that is, by an ass, according to blessed Peter, God wished to reprove the folly of the prophet, how much more and beyond all comparison worthy of teaching and of giving discipline to co-equals is the human nature.”\* It is in reference to these wondrous examples of conversion that the church makes use of that remarkable expression, “O God, the restorer and lover of innocence.”† For among the benefits of penance was reckoned the fulfilment of the divine promise that the years which the locust and caterpillar, and the rust had eaten, should be restored; words interpreted by St. Jerome as implying the restitution of spiritual goods which had been consumed by mortal sin: and St. Anselm says that “when the sins of one who has been absolved are made manifest to an assembled universe, they may give him no more pain than the remembrance of a wound on the body which has been long healed.”‡ But let us proceed now to the institution itself through which such grace is communicated to human souls.

As God the Father laid aside his right of judging, and gave to his Son all power to judge in sending him into the world, so the Son, on leaving the world, transmitted to his apostles and their successors his sovereign authority to condemn or absolve the world.§ “Consider, brethren,” says Hugo of St. Victor, “the merciful dispensation of God. He alone can take away sins and justify sinners, and yet, that he might give security to the human conscience, he hath granted the power of loosing sins, and the power of indulgence to man, in order that man might approach with more familiarity and confidence to man as to his like, whom also he can behold when about to ask and receive pardon. For God can see man praying, but man could not see God indulging. Therefore God hath willed that man should speak to man and treat of his salvation with him, and should seek pardon and receive indulgence from him who is but the minister of Him to whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth.”||

“Show me bitter tears,” says S. Gregory of Nyssa, “that I may mingle mine with yours. Impart your trouble to the priest as to your Father; he will be touched with a sense of your misery. Show to him what is concealed without blushing; open the secrets of your soul as if you were showing to a physician a hidden disorder; he will take care of your honor and of your cure.”¶ And Origen says, “if we discover our sins not only to God but to those who may thus apply a remedy to our wounds and iniquities, our sins will be effaced by him who said, ‘I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist.’”\*\* How do such passages recall the marvellous secrets of Almighty providence, and of heaven’s mercy attested in the chronicles of the ages of faith, and known to so

\* Guibert Abb. de Novigento *Moralium Geneseos Præmium*.

† Fourth feria, 2d week in Lent. ‡ S. Anselmi de *Similitud.* cap. 60. § S. Joan. 20, 21.

|| Hugo de S. Vict. *Eruditionis Theolog.* ex *Miscellau.* Lib. I. tit. 49. ¶ *Serm de Pœnit.*

\*\* Hom. 17. in *Lucam*.



many at all times from the personal experience of a troubled life! How do they recall that transference and constitution of kingdoms, when God having overthrown the tyranny of vices, makes virtues reign in the soul of man.\* “They who fly from Sodom have the angel of God for guide,” says S. John Climachus, alluding to the flight from sin by the sacraments of the church.† “Mark those penitents who kneel down by confessionals at the feet of some meek venerable father who stoops down to hear the whispered lamentation, to beat away the busy meddling fiend that lays strong siege unto the wretch’s soul, and from his bosom purge the black despair. O through what waters must their souls have passed before the sense of what is intolerable constrained them to take refuge here! A men came expressly one hundred leagues to confess to St. Francis de Sales at Paris, and another made a voyage of two thousand leagues by sea to confess to St. Francis Xavier. “Who will place me,” such is their cry, “according to the month of my former days in which God kept me, when his light illumined my heart! Ah, where is that purity of prayer? that certain confidence? Where are those sweet tears in bitterness? Where are they? Where that hope of holy rest? They are perished, and as if they had never been!”

The voice of God walking in Paradise is interpreted by Guibert de Nogent as signifying the reproof or memory of past justice no longer preserved. The Lord calls Adam and saith, Adam, where art thou? He calls him when he wishes to lead him to penance after having committed sins—Where art thou! Mark the place to which thou hast fallen, which is no other than pride, thou who hadst formerly learned to stand humble.‡ “*Quis mihi tribuat, ut sim juxta menses pristinos, secundum dies quibus Deus custodiebat me: quando splendebat lucerna ejus super caput meum, et ad lumen ejus ambulabam in tenebris; sicut fui in diebus adolescentiæ meæ, quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo; quando erat omnipotens mecum et in circuitu meo pueri mei; quando lavabam pedes meos butyro, et petra fundebat mihi rivos olei?*”§

He that once appeared as the angelic youth daily growing up in the favor of God and man, wanders now over the face of the earth, deposed, ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned, a spectacle of ruin or of scorn to all the host of heaven! How shall I behold the face henceforth of God or angels, erst with joy and rapture so oft in purity of heart beheld? Such is the interior cry of erring man, when first the voice is heard which calls him from the truly dreadful grave of mortal sin. Ah, what foul winds have shaken sore his inward state of mind, calm region once, and full of peace, now lost and turbulent: for understanding hath not been suffered to rule, and the will hath not heard her lore; both have been in subjection to sensual appetite, who from beneath usurping over sovereign reason claimed superior sway. Child of grace, wafted towards better waves, the harbingers of untroubled

\* Richard de S. Victor. *de eruditione hominis interioris*. Lib. I. I. 14. † *Scala Paradisi*.

‡ *Moralium Geneseos*, Lib. II. c. 3.

§ Job xxix.

and eternal peace, how did you feel your heart beat when you found yourself within the port of repentance, and how did hope revive when you beheld the senior at your side, holy and revered, with gestures such as spake a father's love; who marked the secret wish by diffidence restrained, and speaking, gave you confidence to speak. He is the true father, who can give preceptual medicine to rage, fetter strong madness in a silken thread, and charm agony with words. "Do you wait to be worthy before you rise up and go to your father?" It is an ascetic of the middle ages who speaks. "And when will that be? If only the good and worthy, and great and perfect ought to approach God, to whom can the publicans and sinners go? Yet the Gospel says, that they drew near to Jesus to hear him. Let the unworthy then approach in order that they may be made worthy, and let the evil come that they may be made good; let the little and imperfect come that they may be rendered great and perfect; let all and each come that they may receive from the plenitude of the living fountain, for he is the fountain of life which is inexhaustible."\*

"Penitence," says St. John Climachus, "is the daughter of hope, the renouncement of infidelity and despair."† "Penitence," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "is tardy knowledge. The first knowledge is innocence. *Βραδεῖα γὰρ γνῶσις μετάνοια, γνῶσις δὲ ἡ πρώτη ἀναμαρτησία.*"‡

"Penitence," says the church, "is the last plank after shipwreck." Richard of St. Victor attests the experience of the church, saying, "often the human mind after a multiplied ruin, being moved by divine inspiration, returns to justice, and being taught and humbled by its fall, rises again the more vigorous inasmuch as it is more instructed and more humbled."§ While those that have greatly fallen find salvation here, the just who falls seven times each day gains strength and facility in his progress to perfection. Slight, indeed, may have been his fall; still he relates it somewhat with that color tinged which oft times pardon for heavier injuries meriteth for man. The poet who had often heard the traditions of the ages of faith, says, "That our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not." In fact, how many virtues on the part of man, how many graces on the part of the divine Mediator, how many attributes of the Divinity would be unknown, if sin had not been, penance, repentance, contrition, satisfaction, sacraments, reconciliation! These were the operations which formed the Catholic character, which destroyed in the soul all hypocrisy and formal virtue, teaching every child of the church to cry with king Richard in the moments of his triumph, "Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood with solemn reverence!" The habit of confession humbled the interior man, and repressed insolence of exterior, sweetened conversation and enlarged the mind; so that if it were possible to submit the temper of the adversaries of the holy discipline to such a progress, we may be

\* Thom. à Kempis, Soliloquium.

† Scala Paradisi, Grad. V.

‡ Stromat. Lib. II. cap. 6.

§ De Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. cap. 1.

assured that it could not long resist its action. Independent even of the supernatural influence, the hearts of many were doubtless inflamed by those previous and subsequent prayers known to the faithful, which were pronounced over the initiated; mystic expressions orally transmitted from the ancient church, beyond all doubt the most impressive and sublime that were ever heard issuing from mortal lips. Times, indeed, there were, when canonic skill imposed delay, when there were doubts which required the postponement of this act of supreme grace; but then mark, reader, with what care the sinking wretch was prevented from falling back to the gulf of the reprobate. The penitent against whom the doors of reconciliation were for a season closed, went away inflamed rather than discouraged, already replete with consolation. His testimony might be that of Adam in reply to the angel who gave hope of mercy even when announcing his sentence of banishment from paradise.

“Gently hast thou told  
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,  
And in performing end us; what besides  
Of sorrow and dejection and disgrace  
Our frailty can sustain, doubt not  
Shall be borne with gratefull resignation,  
In a spirit of contrition and atoning woe.”

There is no important effect even of secular good which the guides of the middle ages do not ascribe to a sincere and humble faith in the sacrament of penance. Guibert de Nogent relates, that in his time there was a young woman on the borders of Cambrai who after becoming the unhappy victim of a seducer, was speedily moved to true contrition, so that she made humble confession of her sin. That night being about to travel to another country, she was overtaken by the same traitor and induced to approach the side of a well into which he threw her; and after a time finding by her reply that she was not dead, he made a shower of stones descend upon her, and then went away, believing that the crime was consummated. After forty days some swine-herds in the fields passing near that well, heard a hollow groan from beneath, which led to the discovery of her being at the bottom. Hastening to the town and returning with ropes, they succeeded, in the presence of a multitude, in drawing her up and restoring her to life. The fame of this miracle was spread to distant lands. “Lo,” cries Guibert, “what avails perseverance in the resolution of amendment. She had faith in patience, and after the grace of confession never doubted God’s mercy and the efficacy of his sacrament. She had that faith which in all the ancient patriarchs is commemorated with such repetition by the apostle.”\* But I should never finish were I to repeat the remarkable events, and the beautiful profound reflections contained in the books of the middle ages respecting the virtue and excellence of that sacerdotal absolution which, as Richard of St. Victor says, “frees

\* Guibert de Novigento de Pign. Sanctorum, Lib. II. cap. 2.



a true penitent studious of satisfying for his sin, not only from the dreadful flames of eternal punishment, but also from the burning fire of purgatory.\* Never, therefore, in days of yore did envious pride find utterance, when men overheard a brother addressing the priest of holy church in words like those of Spenser :

"What service may I doe unto thee meete  
Thou hast from darkness me return'd to light,  
And with thy heavenly salves and med'cines  
Hast drest my sinful wounds ? I kisse thy blessed feete."†

If these things were not conformable to the ideal in the minds of certain philosophers of a perfect and immutable state, it was well remembered that they were avowedly intended for a condition of existence that was recognized as imperfect and mutable. Man alone, a wayfarer, that is, while on earth, was known to be the subject of the sacraments which are the instruments by which all true justice either begins, or is increased when begun, or is restored when lost.‡ As St. Augustin says, "the temporal sacraments are the medicinal ligatures of our contrition. All the things whatsoever that we say to you, whatever is acted temporally in the Church, are ligatures of the contrite. In the state of Jerusalem they will be removed as the surgeon unbinds the patient who is restored to health. There we shall not receive what we receive here. The Gospel shall not be recited that our faith may remain, and no hands of a superior will be imposed upon us. All these things are ligatures of a fracture which will be taken off when we come to perfect soundness." §

Hitherto we have avoided controversy. As the swimmer first creeps along the high bank of the ancient Campus Martius, caressing each flower as he passes, before he commits himself to the impetuous and turbid flood of the Tiber, which he knows will carry him away so far when once he commits himself to it,—so have I lingered on these confines, loth to plunge into a frigid and obscure debate amidst ruins and a wreck of opinions which present nothing tangible or defined, or trustworthy. The Athenian ambassadors said in the assembly of Lacedæmon, that "with all men it was a blameless thing, and the object of no envious displeasure, to establish well the measure most useful against the greatest dangers."|| But the adversaries of the church have formed an exception when they have condemned the salutary and divine institution of the sacramental confession, one of the subjects which they deem eminently calculated to further their efforts to alienate the minds of the ignorant from that state in which alone they can be happy ; thus continuing to verify the saying of wise men in ancient times, that "while the cure of the body is regarded as worthy of immortal honors, the medicine of the soul is by many persons disdained, and by more viewed with suspicion and envy."¶

\* De potestate ligandi et solvendi, c. 23.

† Spenser, III. 5.

‡ De la Hogue de Sacramentis in Genere, cap. 6.

§ Tract, in Ps. 146.

|| Thucydid. I. 75.

¶ Thucydid. I. 75.

In general one may note in the *μισοκαθολικοὶ*, as in all that kind of people who seek a praise by dispraising others, that they do prodigally spend a great many wandering words in scoffs and taunts, carping at each thing which by stirring the spleen, may stay the brain from a thorough beholding the worthiness of the subject. These kind of objections, as they are full of a very idle easiness, (since there is nothing of so sacred a majesty, but that an itching tongue may rub itself upon it,) so, as an ancient writer says, deserve they no other answer, but instead of laughing at the jest, to laugh at the jester. Indeed, these pleasant faultfinders, who will correct the verb before they understand the noun, and confute others' knowledge before they confirm their own, should be reminded at least, that scoffing cometh not of wisdom. Here one may remark in passing, how vain must have been the attempt of those who were separated from the church to understand what passed within it, always arguing a *posse ad esse*. Even in common life strangers can never tell what passes within a house until they have been admitted regularly as members of the family. The wayfarer, if disposed to judge, needs an admonition like that of the hermit in Tasso, who, knowing that the crusaders were misled by a false report respecting Bertoldo's heir—

“Sir knight, (quoth he) if you intend to ride  
And follow each report fond people say,  
You follow but a rash and trothless guide,  
That leads vain men amiss, and makes them stray.”\*

Now the Church had far more mysterious relations than could exist in any mere domestic society, so that by persons who viewed it from without, a right understanding respecting it could only be formed by an act, in the first instance, of confidence in the truth of God who has founded the church. They must at first have been satisfied with the evidence that it was a divinely constituted household, and then after being received into it as members, they would assuredly in due time have discovered how it was holy in all its doctrines, and just in all its ways. As the Athenian says to the blind wanderer who interrogates him respecting the laurel groves to which he has come—“These things, O stranger, are to be venerated, not from the words of men, but rather from long custom and experience.”†

Cicero, indeed, says, that “the medicine of the soul is not only not desired before discovered, but that it is not even valued after it is known;” but such a complaint applies only to philosophy, for it was ungrounded in relation to the remedies which the church administers, insomuch that a man accustomed to confession, when asked for arguments to prove its divine origin as an integral part of religion, must have felt as if he had been called upon to prove the reality of his own existence. Its proofs were in the deepest roots of his spiritual life. His own amendment, the recovery of long lost joy, the renovation of his heart, this was the evidence that must have convinced him so feelingly that each argument beside would seem

\* Cicero, Tusc. III.

† Jerus. Deliv. Lib. XIV. 30.

blunt and forceless in comparison. It is dangerous to follow men into the deepest recesses of their heart and behold what passes there : I will not, therefore, invite the moderns to search into the grounds of their hatred for confession. To persons obstinate in the conclusions of prejudice, reader, would I turn not, when viewing historically the supernatural features in the morality of the Catholic church. On confession and indulgence I will speak not as if to an ignorant multitude, nor to judges, nor to senators, more accustomed to action than to the contemplation of things, but as to a man interiorly philosophic who understands and loves philosophy.

Respecting the hatred of truth and the love of deceiving and of being deceived observable in many men, Paschal says, "Mark a proof of this which fills me with horror. The Catholic religion does not oblige one to discover his sins indifferently to all the world ; it permits him to remain concealed from all other men excepting one only, to whom it commands him to disclose the bottom of his heart, and to show himself such as he really is. There is only this one man in the world that it orders us to undeceive, and he is obliged to an inviolable secrecy, so that this knowledge is in him as if it was not in him. Can one imagine any thing more charitable and more gentle ? Nevertheless, the corruption of man is such that he finds this a hard law, and it is one of the principal reasons which have made a great part of Europe revolt against the church."\* You have heard the great thinker of modern times ; let us now attend to the philosophy of the middle ages. "Silence respecting sin," says the Master of the Sentences, "arises from pride of heart. For a man wishes not to confess his sin in order that he may not be reputed externally such as he exhibits himself in the sight of God, which desire springs from the fountain of pride. For it is pride in a sinner to wish to be esteemed just, and it is hypocrisy to palliate or deny our sin like our first parents, or like Cain to bury it in silence. Now where there is pride and hypocrisy there can be no humility, and without humility there is no forgiveness. Therefore, where there is silence respecting sin there can be no hope of pardon. Here then," he continues, "we see how detestable is the silence of sin, and how necessary is confession, which is the evidence of a conscience fearing God ; for he who fears the judgment of God does not blush to confess. Perfect fear dissolves all shame. The confession of sin has shame, and that shame is a heavy punishment : and for this reason we are commanded to confess, that we may suffer shame, for this is part of the divine judgment."† Thus the words of St. John, beginning with "if we confess our sins,"‡ were not understood as implying merely, "If we say that we are sinners generally with all the world," but as teaching the necessity of suffering the shame and humiliation of confessing one's personal particular sins ; nor was there found any one formerly to maintain that this could be an immoral shame which would injure rather than repair the soul's purity. That extreme horror on finding that

\* Penesces. I. Partie, Art. V.

† Lib. IV. Distinct. 18, 19.

‡ 1 Joan. I. 9.



one has been suspected of crime, which Tieck's hero evinces in his conversation with Balthasar, only proved in fact an unilluminated heart: moreover, this overstrained and false honor reveals its own weakness, for by its very indignation it evinces its conviction that the fall was possible. It is worthy of remark, that while the church inflicted penance on all who ever made mention of expiated sins,—for among the penitential canons of the rule of St. Columban, we read, “He who relates a sin already expiated shall fast on bread and water for a day,”\*—the very men who denounced the act of humility that she imposed as injurious, made no scruple not only as we before observed, in resting in self-contemplation, but also in confessing the sins of their past life; or rather exulted in being able to recall the remembrance of them, disclosing them in detail with effrontery: their own retrospective narration differing from the confession which they renounced and stigmatized, only in the circumstance that theirs was made in defiance of the law of God, in hardened impenitence insensible to shame.

“O fearful thought!” cries S. John Climachus, “there are moments of delirium in the career of sin, when man fears not God, esteems as nothing the memory of eternal punishment, execrates prayer, looks at the relics of the dead as if they were senseless stones.”† True, indeed; but what is it to reflect that in consequence of a new instruction, widely imparted and legally established in some places, this is the case with men now, not during moments of delirium, for which they might repent and make amends, but throughout their whole lives, which pass in an uninterrupted career of self-esteem and congratulation? To the fundamental objection of the moderns, the best mode of reply would be simply to relate in the clear and precise language of the middle ages, what was the Catholic doctrine. Taking, then, Hugo of St. Victor for their representative, let us hear what he says respecting sacerdotal absolution. “Solus Deus peccata dimittit; yet authorities have that power by which priests forgive sins, and that by which God forgives them. But priests are said to forgive sins, because they administer the sacraments in which, and by which, sins are by the divine authority, forgiven.”‡ When it was said that the form of absolution which had been in use thirty years before was deprecatory, and that William of Auxerre, William of Paris, and cardinal Hugo thought that this was the only ancient form, S. Thomas Aquinas replied, that ‘he did not know whether this were true or not; but in any case no authority of antiquity could do prejudice to the words of our Lord, ‘Whatever you shall bind on earth.’” Thus instead of being tempted to enter with them upon subtle, antiquarian investigations, he embraced the spirit of antiquity. It is clear, however, from the Roman council under pope Zacharia, that the form of the sacrament of confession was then similar to what it is at present.§ Strictly judicial is the sacerdotal office so that with ac-

\* *Biblioth. M. Patrum*, Tom. XII. 2.

† *Grad.* XV.

‡ *Hugo de S. Vicat. de Ecclesiasticis officiis*, Lib. I. can. 25.

§ *Mabil. Præfat. in III. Sæcul, Benedict*, § 6.

curate precision has the church retained the name of Basilica, which signified that upper part of the forum, where justice was administered to the people.\*

The world, which instigates men to acts of injustice, is apt to suggest afterwards that the assurance of divine forgiveness is ungrounded and prejudicial. The modern philosopher holds language in regard to him who has been loosed by sacerdotal absolution, which might remind one of the fearful strife which Buonconte describes to Dante.

"Me God's angel took,  
Whilst he of hell exclaim'd : 'O thou from heav'n !  
Say, wherefore hast thou robb'd me ? Thus of him  
Th' eternal portion bear'st with thee away  
For one poor tear.' "†

But the wisdom of the ages of faith does not yield to such a cry as this. And in fact, there was no error which struck more at the root of Catholic manners, than the despair which led to it. Every man who hath rebellious proved to the law of heaven's justice, might say, like Exton, after murdering Richard the Second,

"For now the devil that told me I did well,  
Says, that this deed is chronicled in hell."

Such accusation is heard in the hearts of all who are conscious of guilt without knowing how to escape from it. In this mental torment steeped, there is what Novalis remarks, in the greatest physical pain, a paralysis of susceptibility, than which no disposition is more easily embraced. Man then stands as a destructive power. Alone, unconnected with the rest of the world, he feels himself almighty, and has for principle the hatred of man and of God.‡ Weary at length of sitting like the sullen Achilles, *ἑτώσιον ἄχθς ἀρούρης*,§ a state equally obnoxious both to nature and grace,—bent on destruction, and yet undetermined what object to select, stung with sudden wrath, he turns his fury inward on himself, and joins the wretched band, whom, now more than ever numerous are found ; for without descending to the regions of the dead, we can daily behold what Dante witnesseth, that

"The damned to o'erpass the river are not loath;  
For so heaven's justice goads them on, that fear  
Is turned into desire." ||

Thus he makes that dismal choice to which the heathens devoted their enemies, as in the Virgilian line,

"Di meliora piis, erroremque hostibus illum." ¶

How many men in our age resemble that eternal wanderer whose sorrows have been described in the legendary songs of every people, and whom a modern author

\* Mt. Ant. Surgentis Neapolis Illustrata. c. VI.  
§ II. XVIII. 104.

|| Hell. III.

† Purg. V.

‡ Schriften. II. 299.

¶ Georgic. III. 513

has found so apt a subject for the wild poësy in which his genius takes delight. Ah! could the internal language of conscience, maintaining a continued conversation with these wretched victims, be heard by others, how often would be repeated the fearful dialogue between Ahasuerus and the fabled angel. "I feel a poison on my lips which I drink at every breath. Will it be as bitter to-morrow? More bitter to-morrow than yesterday, in the evening than the morning; more bitter at the bottom of thy flask than at the brim; more bitter in thy lodging than on thy journey, on thy journey than on thy departure; more bitter in the star than in the tempest; more bitter than in the star and the tempest, on the lips and in the eyes of the host. Where goest thou? To my house. Thy gate is shut, thou shalt never pass it more. I have not yet taken my sandals, nor my belt, nor my cloak. Thou hast no need of them. Thou shalt have for coat of mail thy tissue of sorrows, and for cloak, the wind, the snow, and the rain of an eternal cloud. I know not the road. Thou shalt follow the track of the cranes across the sky; thou shalt walk on thorns. The gates of the city shall say to thee, farther; and the river, by the banks of which thou wouldst sit down, shall say farther, farther, to the sea, and the sea shall say to thee, farther, farther. Art thou not the eternal wanderer who shall have neither sleep nor rest, who shall never see the temple of his vow till the dead shall show thee the way to the last judgment in the valley of Jósaphat?" These writers fable not. This echo, this voice of the mountain, this tradition of the sentence of Golgotha, depart, depart, farther on, farther on, pursues every soul of man that doeth evil; vainly does the sinner seek to shake from his head this black crown of cares. He turns to every man but to him by whom he could be delivered, and asks,

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;  
Rase out the written troubles of the brain;  
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart?"

He can describe the evil well, though he disdains to apply to Him who could remove it; disdains, I say, for remark here that it was not with the medicinal lore of the church, as with the remedies of subtle investigators of nature, the secret of which was limited to a few. For the soul's health, the most obscure and ignorant knew or might have known where to apply in time of need, as the chamois-hunter in *Manfred*, where he says to that dark wanderer,

"Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,  
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er  
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet—  
The aid of holy men—"\*

\* *Manfred*, Act II,



Do you ask where are they found? Enter any of our churches, and there you will find them, like their divine Master on the mountain, seated waiting for you. Truly the view of a confessional, which excites the derision of the modern sophists, is enough to bring before the mind's eye of the faithful, Christ and the beatitude of heaven. He taught them seated on the mountain, to show, as St. Bernardine of Sienna remarks, "the sublimity and peace of the divine wisdom. He sat as if waiting for men ; waiting for them in their sickness and infirmities, for men are slow to believe the things that are Christ's, slow to understand what is useful, slow to perform what is necessary, slow to penitence when they leave the right way and pour out their souls in sin ; but the benignity of God, the patience of God, the charity of Christ waits for their repentance, seeking not vengeance but to show mercy. His ministers sit, therefore to attract the hearers. Why can I not hear them speak standing? Methinks I hear you say, I do not like this attraction ; I disdain this authority. True, when there is a discourse in your assemblies to secular men, the orator generally stands, as if inviting to battle. But here, when men are supposed to be religious and contemplative, or desirous of becoming so, the high commissioned teacher remains seated, as if inviting men to tranquillity and peace."\*

Would you learn now how this remedy is administered to the contrite? Listen then to the confessor, who speaks to the penitent in the words of St. Augustin. "Perchance you will say I have been baptized in Christ, when all my past sins were forgiven. I am now become too vile, resuming my former ways, and in the eyes of God returning like a loathsome dog to his vomit. Whither shall I go from his spirit? Whither shall I fly from his face? Whither, brother, unless by penitence to the mercy of Him whose power thou didst scorn by sinning? For from him no one rightly flies, but to him, from his severity to his goodness—for whatever you may have done, whatever may have been your sin, you are still in life, from which God, if he had been altogether unwilling to save you, would have taken you off. Why, therefore, do you not know that the patience of God leadeth you to repentance? For he who by crying out did not prevail upon you not to withdraw from him, by sparing you, cries out persuading you to return."† "As there is no tree so thorny and gnarled that it cannot be made smooth by the skill of the artisan, so there is no sinner," said holy Giles the Franciscan, "so flagitious, that God cannot change his heart, and adorn him with the virtues of his grace."

According to St. Augustin, the sin against the Holy Ghost is that of him who despairing, mocking, or despising the preaching of grace by which sins are washed away, and of peace by which we are reconciled to God, refuses to do penance, resolves to remain hardened in their impious and deadly sweetness, and so perseveres to the end.‡ So, when certain unworthy monks of St. Denis turned

\* S. Bernardini Senensis, tom. III. Ser. IV.

† Serm. CCCLI.

‡ S. August. in Epist. I. ad Rom.

upon Abaillard, who charitably endeavored to convert them to a holier life, and reminded him of his own sin and the scandal he had occasioned, he closed their mouths by those beautiful words of St Gregory, "*Peccare humanum est, permanere autem in peccatis diabolicum.*"\*

By confession and absolution, say the moderns, it is easy for the greatest criminals to tranquillize their conscience, and conceive themselves good Catholics. True, if their penitence be sincere. But what then? Is the church a school of philosophers, boasting of impeccable justice? So far otherwise, that St. Augustin compares it to an asylum opened for the refuse of every state. "Remission of sins," saith he, "which collects citizens to the eternal country, has something to which by a shadow there was a certain similitude in that asylum of Romulus, in which impunity of every crime drew together that multitude by which the state was founded."† You mark what was his idea of the city of God on earth. "The sacraments of the Catholic church were not for the just, but for sinners hungering and thirsting after justice. This was the grace which healed the infirm, not proudly boasting of a false beatitude, but rather humbly confessing a true misery."‡ The world's zeal for virtue and the church's love for justice, are personified and drawn to the life by Shakespeare in two lines, where, to the indignation and scornful question of Leonato to poor Hero,

"Dost thou look up?"

The Friar answers,

"Yea : wherefore should she not?"§

The whole spirit of the Catholic religion is in this reply, "Wherefore should she not?" "*Major est divina misericordia quam humana miseria.*"||

How soon appeared God's mercy upon Adam and Eve, even in the first judgment, reversing instant death, and clothing them naked! "Further," says Louis of Blois, "read the whole life of Christ. What else do you behold but constant mercy for all men? Gratuitously he cures the sick, feeds the hungry, assists those who are in danger, cleanses the lepers, gives sight to the blind and strength to the lame, casts out devils, raises the dead, and absolves the penitent. Examine again his doctrine, and what else does it breathe but an immense mercy of God? For what else appears in the parable of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of money, of the sound to whom there is no need of a physician, to the servant whose whole debt is forgiven, of the lender who excuses both his debtors, of the publican and the pharisee, of the good Samaritan, of the kind steward, of the prodigal son? Does not the very word Gospel promise mercy? Does not the very name Jesus promise salvation to sinners?¶ "Who could have thought," says Pelisson, "that the sinful woman would have obtained by her love and tenderness, the reward of virgins? That the robber punished for his crimes,

\* Moral. in Job.

† De Civitate Dei, Lib. V. 17.

‡ Id. X. 28.

§ Much Ado about Nothing, IV. 1. || Petr. Bles. ¶ Ludovic. Blosii Consolatio pusillan. I.

should have found in his punishment the privilege of martyrs?\* If the ten lepers, who were desired to go and show themselves to the priests, were healed as they went, how much more have the spiritually defiled reason to expect that they will be cleansed by complying with the institution of Christ, in revealing their interior maladies to those ministers of his mercy who have especial authority from him to obliterate or to make indelible?"

St. Augustin, speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees who brought to our Lord the woman taken in adultery, desires us to observe what was the admirable mildness of our Lord. They considered that he was too merciful, too gentle.† On the same day the church reads this Gospel and the history of Susanna accused by the elders and condemned to death. Here is the contrast of human judgment and that of Christ. The one pronounced death, the other these gracious words, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." We condemn these Scribes and Pharisees, and yet they only fulfilled what the law imposed on them. They ought to have been the first to throw the first stone, and the people were to finish afterwards what they had begun. Behold what should confound those who accuse the church for receiving sinners? St. Augustin says that the Jews who had crucified our Lord afterwards fell into despair, but they ought not to have dispaired since Jesus had prayed for them on the cross, and had pleaded in excuse their ignorance.‡ St. Bonaventura undoubtedly speaks the universal sentiment of men in the middle ages on this point, "for," saith he, "the mercy of our God is immense, and if there were in you alone all the sins that ever were committed, or could be committed by other men, his mercy would still exceed them infinitely, and he would pardon you all these things, if you returned to him trusting in the wounds of Christ, and in the clemency of his Mother, considering yourself a sinner, and humbly turning your mind to the fountain of pity."§ "Millies excideras, toties vult spes uti resurgas," was the maxim of the monks of St. Gila in the tenth century. "Nullum peccatum criminale dum displicet," saith St. Augustin, "nullum veniale dum placet." As Durandus observes, the church in her offices reads from the writings of David, who was a homicide and an adulterer, from those of Matthew, who was a publican, from those of Paul, who was a cruel persecutor of Christ, and from those of St. Augustin, who was a Manichæan, holding forth a wondrous standard to rally the dispersed and to remove despair from sinners.|| "Let no one distrust," says St. Ambrose; "let no one conscious of ancient sins despair of divine rewards. The Lord knows how to change his sentence, if you know how to amend your faults."¶ In a word, say the doctors of the middle ages, "His mercy is as incomprehensible as his justice."

As in this world, the abuse of all good gifts follow as naturally as shadows do

\* Réponse aux objections, sect. V.

† Tractat. in 33 Joan.

‡ Tractat. 31 in Joan.

§ Stimul. divin. amoris, Pars II, cap. 4.

|| Duranda Rationale, Lib. VI. c. I.

¶ Lib. II. in Luc. c. I.



on light, it can little surprise us to find that the sacrament of penance should be sometimes perverted from its true intention and spirit, by weak and deluded men.

"There are some," says St. Ambrose, "who ask for penance that they may be at once restored to communion. These do not so much desire to be loosed as to bind the priest, for they do not unburden their own conscience, but they burden his."\*

True, there is a horrible perversity which may possibly develop itself in the practice of repeated confession, to which a most affecting allusion is made by Guibert de Nogent, in the history of his own life, whose words, however, are sufficient to convince every thoughtful reader that it is a stain from which humanity in general is exempt. Let us hear this innocent holy abbot testifying against himself. "I confess, O God, the cause of my infinite errors; I confess the sins of my boyhood, youth, and mature age. Often do I call to mind how I have repeatedly sinned against thee, and how, after each fall, thou didst grant me compunction, and how thou didst bear with me, with a patience beyond all that I can imagine, and such as I can never sufficiently admire. Has this now been an insolent piety, to go on thus sinning, and between sinning returning to thee? Thou knowest that I did not therefore sin because I felt thee to be merciful. I did not abuse thy mercy, when through the necessity of sinning I was compelled to sin. Truly, such an abuse would be too profane, if, because after sin, the return to thee was very easy, the excess of sinning should always have delighted me. I sin truly, but having received reason, it grieves me in the effection of my heart to have transgressed, whenever my mind has succumbed to the heavy temptation. Doubtless here is sufficient to fill me with humiliation and sorrow; but amidst these daily maladies, and as it were, resurrections, what ought I to do? Whether is it not much more sane to struggle to approach thee for a time, or for a moment to take breath in thee, than to forget the remedy and to despair of grace; for what is to despair, unless to cast one's self with deliberation into every sink of flagitiousness."†

Thus the men of the eleventh century had felt and considered, and rejected as groundless, the objection which is now brought with such clamor against the faith and discipline of the church.

We are told also by some, that the penance of the Catholic church renders men satisfied with a mere formal profession, without a sincere return to God. But in this deep suspicion, reader, rest thou not. It is impossible for any one in the least imbued with the learning of the middle ages, to doubt whether the doctrine of the church on this point be obnoxious to such a charge. "True contrition," say theologians, "is one of the acts of the penitent which are, as it were, the matter of this sacrament.‡" A repentance to which the three parts did not belong, was

\* De Pœnitent. Lib. II. c. 9. † Guiberti abb. de Novigento de Vita sua, Lib. I. cap. 1.

‡ Conc. Trident. Sess. 14. cap. 3.

not permitted to tranquillize any conscience." "Penance," says St. Gregory, "is to weep for perpetrated evils, and not to commit again what we weep for." Isidore says, "he is penitent who continues to commit that for which he has done penance."\*

Pope Pius the First, in his epistle to all the faithful says, "Nihil prodest homini jejunaire et orare et alia religionis opera agere, nisi mens ab iniquitate revocetur. And the Master of the Sentences, treating on the sacrament of penance, remarks that our Lord said, "Vade, et amplius noli peccare," and did not say, "Ne pecces," but harbor not even the wish to sin.† "The only remedy for sin," says St. Odo the second abbot of Cluni, "is to refrain from committing it in future."‡

"True penance," says Richard of St. Victor, "is to grieve for the past prevarication, with a firm purpose of confessing, of satisfying, and of avoiding sin in future. With this disposition penitents are worthily absolved by the priest; otherwise, they are sent away without absolution, that is, their sins are retained.§ Hugo St. Victor expresses it thus: "The resurrection of Lazarus designated the effective absolution of the priest; for it was not until our Lord had called him, and restored him to life, saying, 'Lazarus, come forth!' and until he had come forth, that he was loosed by the disciples: from which consideration we may remark, that those only we should loose by pastoral authority whom we understand our Author hath restored to life by resuscitating grace."|| "True confession and true penance," saith he, in another place, "imply that a man so repents his having sinned that he does not repeat the crime."¶ The monks of St. Gall, in the tenth century conveyed the same lesson in verse,

"Optime plorantur, quæ postea non geminantur."\*\*

"All this is expressed in a terrific image by the great poet of the ages of faith, when Count Guide da Montefeltro, whom he meets in hell, though he is rash and unjust in placing him there, describes his being seized by the dark cherub, when he was numbered with the dead, who cried to Him who would have rescued him, "Wrong me not; he is mine, and must below to join the wretched crew.' "

"No power can the impenitent absolve;  
Nor to repent, and will, at once consist,  
By contradiction absolute forbid.  
Oh, misery! how I shook myself, when he  
Seiz'd me, and cried, 'Thou haply thought'st me not  
A disputant in logic so exact.'"††

A glance at *Manipulus Curatorum* of Guido de Monte Rocherius of Rheims in the thirteenth century, or one page of the books of Robert de Sorbon, entitled

\* In Lib. II. de summ bono, cap. 16.

† Sentent, Lib. IV. Distinct. 14

‡ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 318. § Richardi. S. Vict. De Protestate ligandi et solvendi, c. 6.

|| Hugo S. Vict. De Ecclesiast. Officiis, Lib. I. cap. 26.

¶ De Anima, Lib. III. c. 31.

\*\* Ildefons, von Arx Geschichte des St. Gallen. I. 267.

†† Hell. XXVII.

De Conscientia and De Confessione, would be sufficient to deter any one of ordinary courage from accusing the penitents and directors of those times of being deficient in spirituality.\* Truly, the language of the ancient writers is more calculated to make men tremble for themselves, than to excite a spirit of criticism in regard to others.

If thou hadst, reader, lent hitherto a willing ear to those who vilify and mock our holy faith, for holding fast the promise of our Lord, I will render thee more apt to cope with them, and let this evidence

“Henceforth be lead unto thy feet, to make  
Thee slow in motion as a weary man,  
Both to the ‘yea’ and ‘nay’ thou seest not.”†

St. Ambrose says that it is far easier to preserve your innocence, than truly to repent.‡ Yes, this was in primitive times, you say, but what thought the dark ages? Hear, then, Richard of St. Victor, who will dispel such doubts. “If,” saith he, “you wish to know and can hear it patiently, a pagan is more easily reconciled after a hundred crimes than a Christian after only one. For whatever is committed by an infidel is counted a sin of ignorance, since, even if he had known that he was sinning when he sinned, yet he knew not how to examine the weight of sin; he knew not that it could only be expiated by the death of the man-God. Therefore the darkness of his ignorance immeasurably mitigates the enormity of sin; but Christians, who know that they are redeemed from death by the death of Christ, cannot be excused by ignorance.”§ Iona, in his Laical Institutes, speaks to the same effect, and says, “that those are more severely punished who received the faith of Christ and finished life in sin, than those who died without faith and yet performed good deeds;” which opinion he confirms from St. Peter and St. Luke.¶

The Master of the Sentences shows that no one can be a true penitent for one sin only, unless he is so equally for all. “Nunquam aliquem sanavit Dominus quem non omnino liberavit—quem ergo pœnitet omino pœniteat—pœnitentes si vero estis pœnitentes, et non estis irridentes, mutate viam, reconciliamini Deo.”\*\*

That sins were known to be forgiven in the sacrament of penance is true, but it was also well known that there might be the temporal penalty still to pay. Every one in the middle ages had heard of what the abbot Sabbatius used to relate, because it was inserted in the work of Sophronius, that while he was living in the monastery of Firminus, a robber came requesting to be admitted as a convertite, who, after nine years of probation, requested the abbot to give him back his secular habit, saying, that he believed his sins were forgiven him; that

\* Bibliothec. Patrum de la Bigne, IV. † Dante, Parad, XIII. ‡ Dante, Parad. XIII.

§ Richardt S. Vict. De Protestate ligandi et solvendi, cap, 22.

|| II. 2. 21.

¶ XII. 47, 48. Ionæ Aurelianens. Episcop. de Institut. Laicali, Lib. I. c. 19.

\*\* Sentent. Lib. IV. Distinct. 15.



he had fasted, prayed, and lived a holy life, but that he always saw a boy standing near, and saying, "Why did you slay me?" That he saw him in the church when he went to communion, in the refectory, in his dreams, and that he never left him. "Therefore," says he, "I am resolved to offer myself to death for that boy, for I murdered him." So he went to Diospolis, and on the next day was beheaded.\*

Innumerable things, indeed, connected with the discipline of penance in the middle ages, were calculated to excite salutary fear. In the penitentiaries of the east and west, it was ordained that the penance imposed upon masters should be double of those imposed for the same sins on servants.† "Observe," says Richard of St. Victor, "how in the description of the grief of the lovers of Babylon, kings are placed first, because in proportion as the evil were more powerful in the world, so will they be the more miserable in hell." "Potentes potenter tormenta patientur."‡ "No one moreover," as the Master of the Sentences observed, "could worthily do penance whom the unity of the church did not sustain; for," saith he, "it is not to be believed that he can recognize his sins to conversion of life, if he cannot have part in the communion of saints."§ "No one," he continues, "is truly penitent for sin, having a contrite and humble heart, unless he is in charity; and hence it follows that a conversion in death is difficult, for he who repents late must not only fear judgment but also love; since without charity no one can be saved."|| Belacqua's fate, revealed to Dante, gave salutary warning to those that would to the end delay repentant sighs.¶ Alcimus Avitus, arch-bishop of Vienne explains in verse the uncertainty and danger of late penance.

"Pœnitet ambigùe quem serò pœnitet : ergo  
Præsentis spatium nobis dum creditur ævi,  
Dum patulam cunctis Christi clementia sese  
Præbet, præteritæ plangamus crimina vitæ  
Pœniteatque olim negligenter temporis acti,  
Dum licet, et sano ingenioque, animoque valemus.  
Nam qui peccatum moriens dimittit, et ipsa  
In serum tempus differt admissa fateri,  
Non tam dimittit, quam dimittatur ab illis."

The objection against the Catholic doctrine of penance founded on the repentance of great sinners at their death, has been refuted in a masterly manner by Manzoni.\*\* "The man who suffers shipwreck," he remarks, "calculates ill, who from believing in the possibility of reaching land, defers leaving the wreck, for the longer he delays the greater will be the difficulty;" and such was the argument of the church to those who were inclined to delay their conversion. In fact, the clergy

\* Pratum Spirituale, cap. 166.

† Super Apocalypsim, Lib. VI. c. 1.

‡ Id IV 18, 19. ¶ Purg. IV.

† Charden, Hist. des Sacramens, Tom. II. c. 5.

§ Super Apocalypsim Lib. IV. 17.

\*\* Osservazione sulla Morale Catholica, cay.10.

constantly appealed to the experience which verified her predictions. "These inveterate sinners," exclaims Bourdaloue, "die as they lived. They have lived in sin, and they die in sin; they have lived in the hatred of God, and they die in the hatred of God; they have lived as pagans, and they die as the reprobate. This is what experience teaches us. To believe that habits contracted during a whole life are destroyed at the approach of death, and that, in a moment, can be gained a different mind, a different heart, a different will, is the grossest of all errors. At death above all times, it is most difficult to obtain true contrition. The time for seeking the God of mercy is life, the time for finding him is death. Hear again Masillon, "You have lived dissolute, you will die such; you have lived ambitious you shall die without the love of the world and of its vain honors having died in your heart; you have lived indolently in vice and virtue, you will die cowardly and without compunction.

What does Jesus Christ declare will be the fruit of these deferred tears? "Quæritis me, et in peccato vestro moriemini." "But why then," asks Manzoni, "does the church hasten to assist the dying sinner?" "Observe," he replies, in answer to this question, "that the church seems to have two languages for this matter, the one calculated to inspire terror in the strong, intrepid sinner who promises himself a future time for repentance, and the other to yield confidence to the dying." In this there is no contradiction, but prudence and truth. Men in both these states are disposed only to regard one side of the question; and the church presents to them precisely that which they forget.\* It is true both in life and death, the clergy, as St. Antoninus of Florence prescribed, were more prompt to loose than to bind. They marked the benignity of our adorable Lord, which had little need of entreating. His mother said no more but "*Vinum non habent*," and presently the water becomes wine; the leprous man had no sooner said, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean, than he heard, "*Volo, mundare*:" the centurion could hardly say, Lord, my boy lieth at home sick of the palsy, when he was interrupted with, "*Ego veniam et curabo eum*." St. Martha and Magdalen sent to him saying, "*Domine, quem amas infirmatur*," and he presently came with them. This was the model which guided their conduct, but as St. Chrysostom said, surely it was better to have to answer for being too merciful than for being too severe. St. Odilo, abbot of Cluni, in imposing penance, evinced rather a maternal tenderness than the command of a father, and when some reprehended his lenity, he used to reply, "Although I may be condemned, yet I would rather be condemned for mercy than for severity."† We read of St. Gerard, bishop of Toul, that it was always his custom before retiring to sleep, among other prayers, to make mention by name of all those whom he had been obliged to excommunicate and them he absolved with merciful piety, lest sudden death should be visited upon any of them; but this he did secretly, lest he should lead them to insolent presumption; and he

\* Osservazioni sulla Morale Catholica, p. 477.

† Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 318,

prayed the Almighty that he would put it into their hearts to feel the desire of reconciliation.\* In other cases at least it was believed that there were exceptions in the unsearchable ways of Providence, when one might say without self-delusion, like the knight of old,

“ Between the stirrup and the ground  
I mercy asked, I mercy found.”

Such were, no doubt, the belief and practice of the clergy in the middle ages.

“The wisest and best men  
With goodness principled not to reject  
The penitent, but ever to forgive.”

In the synodical statutes of Verdun in the year 1508, it is said that if a robber on his way to the scaffold should confess or wish to confess, he should be given the body of Jesus Christ, interred in the cemetery, and recommended in holy prayers; but let us not on that account be deceived by the misrepresentations of men who review history with the same eyes as those with which they at present travel through Catholic countries. “I am of opinion,” says Manzoni, “that in Italy among those who run the deplorable career of crime, there are in our days, (and he might have gone farther back,) few or none superstitious, and many who do not care at all for the things of religion.” These portraits of men issuing from the sacred tribunals to commit sins of every kind, these assassins described by Sismondi, “who observes meagre with devotion,” are after all, only fictions of northern travellers, who imagine that every outlaw has a profound veneration for the church, and is a strict observer of the ecclesiastical precepts.† The real histories furnished in the sacred tribunals of Italy and Spain, are parallel to that affecting story of St. John reclaiming the young robber, which is so beautifully told by St. Clemens Alexandrinus, at the end of his book entitled “*Quis Dives Salvetur*.” But if the doctrine and general language of the middle ages respecting penance be more calculated to make men tremble than to criticise, what shall we say of the examples recorded in history, which show what was then understood practically by contrition? Not to revert to what we observed in the fourth book, or to anticipate what we shall meet with hereafter in the sanctuaries of peace, only reflect, reader, upon any of the innumerable instances of profound compunction for sin which are attested in the ancient annals. The unblest tears of Rinaldo in chivalrous fable may represent the beginning of this state,

“ His looks he downward cast and nought he said,  
Griev’d, sham’d sad, he would have died fain,  
And oft he wish’d the earth or ocean wide  
Would swallow him and so his errors hide.”

\* *Acta Tulliensium Episcop.* apud Martene *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. III.

† *Osservazioni sulla Morale Catholica*, 215.



Yet his sorrow was only caused by the consciousness of having spent many days luxuriously in the palace of Armida.\* Ah, when would the carpet champions of modern times be similarly moved by the mere view of the bright panoply of saintly warriors? St. Thomas of Canterbury had consented to receive the constitutions of Clarendon, and that act of compliance was sufficient immediately after to fill his breast with the sadness of death. "Unhappy man," cried he, as he rode back from the assembly, "I see the English church enslaved for ever in punishment of my sins! It had needs be so, I came from the court and not from the church. I was a hunter of beasts before being a pastor of men; the lover of mimics and dogs is become the conductor of souls. Behold me then abandoned by God!"† Pope Clement V. is named in the most scornful terms by the very historians who nevertheless conclude with the testimony of Villani, who says that after the trial of the templars he never smiled more: this sensibility of conscience could sometimes even give a dignity which is due to force of soul, as when Manin, the last Doge of Venice, fainted the moment after he had taken the oath to Austria according to the treaty of Campo Formio.

Let us pass to another question on which the moderns and the followers of antiquity are at issue, concerning which, if any one should ask the former immediately, as Socrates says of the sophists, "like brass that is struck upon, which emits a loud and lengthened sound, they break out into an endless discourse, unless you take great care to stop them short."‡ Their constant complaint, for one cannot say objection, is that the Catholic church, by means of indulgences destroyed the foundations of all morality and justice. Truly, to hear them on this point as on many others, may remind one of the comment of Guibert de Nogent on the famous question addressed to our first parents, "*Cur præcepit nobis Deus ne comederitis de omni ligno paradisi?*" "for," saith he, "it is the custom of obscure persons to discuss the highest things rashly and proudly. Thus the serpent begins by naming God before all created things, and ends by imputing to him what he never said; for not of every tree of paradise, but only of one particular tree did he forbid man to eat."§ They say that the church destroyed the foundations of morality by her doctrine of indulgences: they say so, but we are not to credit every word they say. Not hastily according to the passion of men, "*sed caute et longanimiter res est secundum Deum ponderanda.*" Naaman was angry and went away in disdain when he heard of the terms of God's indulgence, though it was a salutary advice which was given him by his own servants to obey the prophet.|| Men speak against indulgences without consideration, without consistency. In the Christian religion as in nature, every thing is indulgence. Baptism, like natural birth, is the grand indulgence by which the renovation of man commences; and as St. Augustin adds, "neither can the rest of his life, from the age when he comes to the use of reason, be without the remis-

\* XVI. 31.

† Protagoras.

‡ *Moralium Geneseos*, Lib. II. c. 3.

§ Kings iv 5

ion of sins, however inclined he may be to justice."\* Therefore, the Church feeling the depth of this mystery, and being perfectly sensible of the inadequacy of the terms offered to sinful man, says in addressing the Almighty, "Thou who dost particularly manifest thy omnipotence by sparing and showing mercy."†

That the canonical penalties of the primitive church were the origin of indulgences is clear, and that the love of justice and the desire of greater union with God inspired their institution is no less certain. If thou shalt hear henceforth another origin assigned of that which sounds so execrable in modern books, I forewarn thee now, that none by falsehood may beguile thee of the truth. Attend to what saith the council of Nice, "Whoever being penetrated with the fear of God shall testify by his tears, patience, and good works, that he has really changed his life, shall by the merit of prayers be re-established in communion after accomplishing the time marked for this station. Besides this, the bishop may use still greater mildness, but as for those who are not so touched, and who are little concerned about their condition, and who think it enough to come to the church, their time of penance must not be shortened."‡ "The right of granting indulgences," say the canons, "that is, of remitting a whole or a part of the temporal punishment of sin, was given by Christ to the apostles and their successors in the grant of the power of binding and loosing, which is exercised in its supreme degree by the head of the church, and under him with limits by other bishops and priests."§ Clearly there was no more difficulty in believing the existence of this power in reference to the suffering than to the Militant church; for whether it was exercised over the living penitents who smote their breasts, or over those spirits who prayed for others' prayers to hasten on their state of blessedness, the authority was equally above nature and divine. To the arguments of those who deny the reality of any temporal punishment hereafter, a reply has been already made in a former book. Truly the answer of Sir Thomas More deserves their attention, "for as for purgatory," saith he, "though they thinke there be none, yet sith they denie not, that all the corps of Christendom by so many hundred yeres, have believed the contrarie, and among them all the olde interpretoours of Scripture from the apostles' daies downe to our owne time, of whom they denie not many for holy saintes; that I dare not believe these men against all those, these men must of their curtesie hold my poore feare excused. And I beseeche our Lord heartily for them, that when they depart out of this wretched world, they find no purgatorie at all; so God kepe them from hel." Vengeance of heaven, how shouldst thou be feared by all who think upon that region of eternal peace into which nothing defiled can enter, by all who have sought to know themselves, and who have read of that trial of every work hereafter by refining flame! O these sins, these common venial sins. how hugely and

\* S. August. Enchirid. cap. 17.

† Coll. tenth Sund, after Pent.

‡ Con. Nic. c. 12.

§ Joan. Devoti. Instit. Canonic. Lib. II. tit. III. §. 1.

gigantically they swell out ! How horrible it is to see their consequences unfolding themselves far away in the realms of the future ! how they take root and grow up riotously in after generations ! what hope for man but in remission and indulgence !

Here again, as in the question of penance, the doctrine of the Church need only be stated to be at once justified. To say that this ascribes to human virtues an efficacy beyond what sacred wisdom warrants, is to evince a total ignorance of the Catholic doctrine, for in order that works may merit it is required that the party who worketh be in a state of grace and an adopted child of God ; so that all works are excluded from meriting, which are performed by one who is not in a state of grace, that is, who wanteth true faith, true hope, true charity ; and besides the free promise and covenant of God is necessary, and these very works take their merit from Christ. They say that the merits of the saints, and the sacrifice of the mass, which are the secondary source of indulgence, are an injury to the all-sufficient sacrifice of the cross ; “but,” asks Bossuet, “when Christ coming into the world devoted Himself wholly to God that he might be in place of those victims which did not please him,\* did he do an injury to his immolation on the cross ? and when he now appears before God for us,† does he take away from that oblation with which he once offered himself ? And when he ever intercedeth for us,‡ does he show that the intercession was imperfect which he made for us with tears at his death.§ Nay, on that account is the sacrifice of the cross perfect, because whatever preceded and whatever follows it are wholly referred to it ; the antecedents as a preparation, the consequents as its consummation and application. If you say that indulgences have been abused, we may reply with the angel of the school, that there is nothing which human malice cannot abuse, since it abuses even the goodness of God.”|| But then, on the other hand we must not at once admit every thing to be an abuse which the moderns affirm to be such. Hear what St. Ambrose saith. “We have many subsidiary means by which we can redeem our sins. Have you money ? Redeem your sins. The Lord is not venal, but you yourselves are venal : redeem yourself by your works.”¶ We have beforeseen that the cathedrals, monasteries, hospitals, bridges, and other public monuments of the middle ages, are so many memorials of this kind of redemption : nevertheless, Thomassinus remarks, “that St. Petrus Damianus, who relates the compensations appointed by the church in the middle ages for the remission of the temporal penalty of sins, was so far from suspecting the church of any view to her own emolument, that the thought never appeared to have entered his mind, though against the plague of avarice and corruption he boils over if he can but detect a trace of it any where.”\*\* “Sane cavendum est,” say the decrees of Ives de Chartres, “ne quisquam existimet infanda illa crimina, qualia qui agunt regnum Dei non possidebunt quotidie perpetranda et eleemosynis

\* Heb. x. 25.

† Id ix. 24.

‡ Id. vii. 25.

§ Id. v. 17.

|| Summ. Theolog. P. III. 9. 3. art. 8.

¶ S. Ambrosii, Lib. de Elia et Jejunio, cap. 20.

\*\* De Vet. et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin, Pars III. Lib. I. cap. 30.



quotidie redimenda. In melius est quippe vita mutanda et per eleemosynas de peccatis præteritis est propitiandus Deus.”\* That abuses, however, did prevail in the fifteenth century, in the dispensation of indulgences, was never questioned ; but to qualify rightly and yet in language of moderation the inference drawn from that fact by modern historians, would be difficult. Manzoni in admitting and deploring the evil, asks, “Do the excessive concessions of indulgences interfere with the principles of morality ?” To which he answers, “No, at no time.” The manner of dispensing indulgences, as Bossuet observes, regards discipline. This being the case, their excessive concession would be an abuse. Now the Catholic church is constituted in such a manner that abuses can never alter the principles of morality, because these are without the sphere of discipline and are placed in that of faith. So that every essential principle of morality being an article of faith, it can only be destroyed by a doctrine establishing a contrary principle. Therefore the principles of morality remain untouched notwithstanding the possible excess in the concession of indulgences.† Besides, to whom were indulgences applicable ? “The prelates of the church,” says Duns Scotus, who states and refutes the most acute and subtle objections to indulgences,‡ “can from the treasury of the church confer indulgences on members of the church, that is, on men existing in charity, otherwise they are not members capable of receiving the influence of others, as a dead member in a natural body cannot receive an influence or any nourishment from others. ‘Unusquisque onus suum portabit,’ says the objectors. True, but on the other hand, ‘alter alterius onera portate ;’ the first should be understood of the eternal punishment in which no one is punished for another, although temporally one man is well punished for another even by God.”§ No one unworthy of having his temporal penalty paid by another’s satisfaction could truly gain the fruits of an indulgence ; for whoever neglected to satisfy by himself was unworthy to have the satisfaction of others applied to the discharge of his debt.|| Besides, what was an indulgence in relation to the eternal law of justice ? It was after all but part of it. William of Paris says, “that many prudent men affirm a dispensation to be a law, and not a diminution of law, or a derogation from a law, because the cause for which it is granted renders it so just that the legislator himself would have required it.” You hear of vows being changed by dispensation ; but how ? Dante answers that question with theological precision—

“Nor deem of any change as less than vain,  
If the last bond be not within the new  
Included, as the quatre in the six.”¶

And who were the persons who abused indulgences ? Were they infidels who rejected and scorned whatever came through the church ? Were they libertines

\* Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. de Speculativis Sentent. cap. 121.

† Osservazioni sulla Morale Catholica, 197.

‡ Duns Scoti Miscellaneorum, 9. IV.

§ Id. 6. VI.

|| La Hogue de Purgatorio, Art. III.

¶ Parod. V.

who never took the trouble to listen to their conditions? Were they devout persons who knew that to gain them, those interior dispositions are absolutely essential which remove the possibility of their being abused? Moreover, what these objectors call mere external observances did mean and involve something more in the common estimation of men than they suspect. When Henry the Second pretended to be reconciled with St. Thomas by the interposition of the King of France, in the interview at Chinou, king Henry ordered that for mass of reconciliation, a mass for the dead should be said, because at that the kiss of peace was not given.\* Queen Jeanne persuaded the regent of France to have an interview with Charles, king of Navarre. A treaty was signed; the bishop of Lisieux said mass, and would have given the communion to both; but the king of Navarre, who believed in the religion which he outraged, refused to receive under pretence of his having broken his fast.† If even against political interests these principles were proof how much more must they have prevailed in the ordinary action of less excited life?

The instructors of the middle ages were continually reminding the people of what Massillon observed in his charge on the publication of the Jubilee, in the year 1724. "Let us not think," said he, "that the graces of the church have purified us, if they have not changed us. Let us depend upon her indulgence only in proportion as we can depend upon our own sincere repentance." "No one besides," as Sardagna remarks, "without an especial revelation could be certain that he had gained an indulgence."‡

I am aware that from this very solicitude of the clergy to guard against the misinterpretation of indulgences, and their frequent admonitions against being content with observing certain religious practices, while neglecting indispensable duties, some writers have argued that such an abuse was common. Manzoni replies to them as follows: "To understand this subject, we must distinguish two degrees, or rather two kinds of goodness, that with which the world is content, and that desired by the Gospel, and inculcated by its ministers. The world, for its own sake, desires that men should refrain from crimes, but the Gospel requires not alone the avoiding disorders, and the observance of blameless manners in the eyes of men, but the spirit of Jesus Christ crucified. It is the want of this spirit which is the object of the Catholic priest's complaint, who fears lest men, in the external practice of religious duties, by living in the world, should forget the supernatural end which ought to direct the Christian. But those whom he thus advises and cautions, are men whom the world has no right to bewail, they are the best among its children, and if the Church is not content with that degree of virtue, it is because she excites them to proceed to an order of holiness, of which the world has no knowledge. Having no other interest

\* Vit. Quadrip. 109.

† La France sous les cinq. Premiers Valois. II. 125.

‡ Sardagna Theolog. Dogmat. tom. VIII. art. VII. c. 8.

than the salvation of men, she requires the virtue which tends to perfection, not that which may be useful to the preacher.”\*

Finally, if we consider the nature of the indulgences, though we should omit to speak of those great and arduous works of charity and piety, to which they gave rise during the middle ages, and should only confine our view to the interior and spiritual exercises which were implied in their acquisition, it will require no singular perspicuity of genius, and no bias in favor of antiquity, to discern their admirable tendency in relation to the exercise of the highest justice. No doubt the obligation of many actions required as conditions of indulgences, seem incommensurate with the offered grace; but, as Manzoni observes, “it is impossible to conceive a system of morality or rule of life, in which there are no obligations of various kinds, and of different degrees of importance. The perfect morality would be that in which all the obligations would proceed from one principle, and be directed to one sole end, and that most holy;—and such is the Catholic morality.” If there were indulgences for those who accompanied the holy viaticum from the church to the sick man’s house, and thence back to the church, if there were indulgences on visiting certain churches, on assisting at the dedication of others, as in the year 1040 to all who repaired to St. Victor’s, at Marseilles, and to all who assisted at the dedication of the church of Monte Cassino, if there was an indulgence to all who being contrite and confessed, should enter the cemetery of St. Callixtus, pope and martyr, where a hundred and seventy-four thousand martyrs were buried with forty-six popes—*qui omnes ex magna tribulatione venerunt, et ut hæredes fierent in domo Domini mortis supplicium pro Christi nomine pertulerunt*,† if there were indulgences for all who repeated certain prayers, on hearing the great bell of the cathedral of Grenada tolled every afternoon at three o’clock, in memory of the deliverance of that city from the Moors, and that being the hour when the Cardinal Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, planted the cross on the highest tower of the Alhambra, while the Count of Tendilla displayed the knightly banner of Castille, and Don Gutierre de Cardenas that of St. Iago, while Ferdinand and Isabella sunk upon their knees, exclaiming, *Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi sit gloria*, on which spot a chapel was immediately erected, which stands to the present day, the one motive by which these and a thousand other similar exercises were converted into channels of heavenly grace, was charity, the union of the soul with God, or, in other words, the love of God and the love of man. Separate from this principle, many of these acts may indeed seem trifling and inconsiderable, but as Hugo of St. Victor says, “*in parvo opere magna devotio potest esse*.”\* A pilgrim at least will be little disposed to cavil here who remembers what fervent devotion was excited in his breast, when at Rome and elsewhere he visited such places, when he kissed the cross upon the gates of St. Paul and St.

\* Osservaz. sulla Morale Cattolica, 222.

† Aringhi Rom. Subter. 282.

‡ Hug. S. Vict. De Sacramentis, Pars XIV. 3.



Lorenzo—when he ascended upon his knees those mystic steps which recall the passion of the man-God—when he saw lifted over him that rod of discipline at the threshold of the holy Apostles—when he drank from the fountain at the Salvian waters where the chosen One received his crown. There is, one might say, transferring the poet's image to express higher things, a tide in the spiritual affairs of men, which when taken at the flood, leads on to paradise; omitted, all the voyage of their life seems left unprotected by influence divine; we must take the current of justice, as of human felicity, when it serves, or lose our ventures, for, as Cardan saith, *nostra omnia momentanea sunt*. Moments there are in life, especially in its early years, when from the presence of such objects as recall the mind to a sense of religion, to a memory of all that the divine Jesus suffered, and of all that his saints in successive ages have endured, men, the most cold and thoughtless, feel suddenly inflamed with a seraphic ardor of spirit, to love and serve God with all their heart, and all their mind, and all their strength, and are ready to exclaim with a most generous passion, though we should die with thee, yet will not betray thee in any wise. Oh heavens! were man but constant, he were perfect; that one error fills him with faults, and makes him run through all sins. Now, the object of these indulgences was to make him, in regard to these impressions, constant; it was to multiply and protract these blessed intervals; to make, as it were, the time of flood in the soul recur at short intervals, in order that he might have many ventures, many periods of excitement; it was to give him habits of making acts of faith, hope, and charity, so that at length, from many repetitions and returns, becoming constant, he might attain to the perfection and immortal felicity of his nature. The exercises to which indulgences were attached, were generally such as of all others in the moral order that can be conceived, are most worthy of an immortal intelligence.

There were indulgences attached to the daily recital of the Trisagion and Gloria Patri,\* to making acts of faith, hope, and charity,† to praying for the exaltation of the church, the peace and concord of Christian princes, and the extirpation of error,‡ to the invocation of the holy name of Jesus, to the examination of conscience, to the conversion of sinners in withdrawing them from immorality, heresy, blasphemy, detraction, or calumny, to the reconciliation of enemies, to the showing reverence to Christ's blessed mother, to meditation on the cross, or visiting the stations, to prayer in memory of our Lord's crucifixion on Fridays, at three o'clock,§ to spending the three hours of agony on Good Friday in prayer or meditation, to visit devoutly, with proper dispositions, the seven churches of Rome,|| to the recitation of the Angelus, or the Regina Coeli three times every day,¶ to the sanctification of the month of May by devoting it to the contemplation of the graces of Mary, to the recitation of the prose, *Stabat Mater*,\*\* to re-

\* By Clement XIII.

† Bened. XIII. XIV.

‡ Greg. XIII.

§ Bened. XIV.

|| St. Greg. the Great.

¶ Bened. XIII. XIV.

\*\* Innocent XI.

ceiving communion on the festival of St. Louis Gonzagua, the patron of youth,\* to the instruction of others in mental prayer,† or in the Christian doctrine,‡ to performing the works of mercy, nourishing three poor persons in honor of the holy family, to the visiting of hospitals, or houses of refuge, to the visitation of prisoners, to the enabling of the poor to marry, to wearing medals, or crucifixes, or chaplets, that had been given to one's self, which had touched the holy places, or the relics of the holy land,§ to a good preparation for death, to an act of resignation daily renewed.¶ Are these exercises trivial and ridiculous? Is the hope of grace, upon condition of performing them with the dispositions implied, unjust or inconsistent with the wisdom of God, that learned men of the modern discipline should place the Apostolic Brief, defining it, in their cabinets of curiosities amidst the idols of Egypt, to be displayed before the white, upturned wondering eyes of fools, that fall back as if afraid to gaze upon it? Truly, that indulgences should furnish mirth in the circle of libertines, or in the school of those sophists who have an exchequer of words, and no other treasure to give their followers, will surprise no one; but, setting aside all theological argument, he that cannot discern the force and facility which they yield to virtue, whatever diplomas he may have taken out, or whatever academic walks he may have haunted, methinks should not be chronicled for wise.

---

## CHAPTER IX.



WE have seen the heroic and supernatural character of the Catholic morality, but there are still many remarkable points of difference distinguishing it from the system of human philosophers, and from that of the modern societies in general, of which I have not yet given an historical illustration. To contrast the manners of the Christian republic in its happiest ages, with those of the ancient world, would be a still less subtle exercise than tracing the contrast between the Gospel and the philosophic writings of the Gentiles. To review the heathen manners falls not to our province; and that writer may indeed be an object of compassion who is condemned to approach a subject so horrible and so revolting. Moreover, there can be but few who need being reminded in general of the revolution which had been wrought in the law and practice of manners by the Redeemer. It confers no benefit, methinks, to compose a picture in hard prominent outlines, or abound-

\* Bened. XII.

† Bened. XIV.

‡ Clement. XII.

§ Innocent. XI.

¶ Vide Manuel des Dévotions et Indulgences utorisées par le Saint Siège.

ing in sharp transitions from light to shadow. It may be left to others, therefore, to represent the contrast between classic and sacred Italy—between the times which beheld by luxury more than Roman conquests, and those when Sybaris was an episcopal see, and Capua a nurse of martyrs. But in answer to those who represent the highest justice and perfect morality, as independent of Catholic manners, fain would I something say. The moral teachers of antiquity are painted by each other with such precision, that we can hardly feel at a loss respecting the character which should be ascribed to them. Who of them, asks Cicero, regards his discipline not as an ostentation of science, but as a law of life? Some are addicted to such levity and boasting, that it would be better for them never to have learned aught. Some are greedy of money; others of glory; many are the slaves of lust, so that their discourse differs prodigiously from their life.\*

In the most exquisite of all the Platonic writings we have the same contrast to the severity of Catholic manners in the language of Agatho's philosophic guests, who allude with such effrontery to their yesterday's debauch, desiring now one and all, that there may be a temperate meeting and no drunkenness, particularly as they have not yet recovered from the effects of their last banquet, agreeing that they should now only drink for pleasure, and not to intoxication.† Nepos, writing to Cicero, says, "So far am I from regarding philosophy as the mistress of life, and the source of happy life, that I think no men have such need of masters to instruct them in living, as the greatest part of those who are occupied in their disputations; for I see that the men who prescribe rules of continence and modesty most artfully in the school, live devoted to all kinds of lust. Seneca was of the same opinion, and Cicero repeatedly shows that the men who had any virtue in Greece and Rome were not formed by the discipline of philosophy, but by following ancient traditions." S. Clemens Alexandrinus presses hard upon the heathen philosophers, reminding them of the manners of their own heroic models. "Phœnix," saith he, "was the tutor of Achilles, and Adrastus of the sons of Croesus, Leonidas of Alexander, and Nausithous of Philip. Phœnix was abandoned to the love of women; Adrastus was a run-away; Leonidas did not subdue the pride of the Macedonians, nor did Nausithous cure the drunkard of Pella. The Thracian Zopurus was not able to restrain the licentiousness of Alcibiades; and Sikinnus, the tutor of Themistocles' sons, used to be caught dancing the Satyr's dance."‡ Socrates and Glaucus agree with the opinion so eloquently proclaimed by modern statesmen and legislators, that a man will do many things while alone, which he would not dare to do if any eyes were upon him, and which he would not tolerate in any one else; and that he will differ greatly when alone in secret, and when he is exposed to the view of other men.§ "Who ascribed the highest

\* Tuscul. II. 14.

† Clemens Alex. Pæd. Lib. I. c. 7

‡ Plato, Symposium, cap. 4

§ Plato, de Repub. Lib. X.



authority to the Roman senate?" asks an orator who carried his love of heathen antiquity to extravagance. "He who stript it of all. Who consulted the Chaldeans and the Magi? The same man who banished them from the city. The same was cruel, and in semblance kind, grasping and able to pass for liberal. He built temples, and he laughed at religion; he rejected aliens, and he despised his country; he did not approve of fraud in an enemy, without which he never approached either friend or foe. But a man, wholly wicked, is never without an appearance of virtue."\* Varro thought it necessary to deceive the multitude, and leave it in the superstition of the civil theology; and St. Augustin exclaims, "Spectacles of turpitude and license of vanities are instituted at Rome, not by the vices of men, but by the order of your gods."† What a contrast to the teachers of the Christian ages, who taught the people of God what was between the holy and corrupt, between the clean and the unclean? It is true there are lofty views of morality and justice in the writings of some of the philosophers; but, as Persius said, men regarded more what Jupiter did than what Plato taught, or Cato judged. And after all what were the philosophers, in regard to morals, if compared to any humble obscure monk of the middle age? "We do not compare Plato," says St. Augustin, "to any holy angel of highest God, nor to any true prophet, nor to any Apostle, nor to any martyr of Christ, nor to any Christian man."‡

Pliny says, "*Nihil esse miserius vel superbior homine.*" But when the house was built after the captivity, when the holy church arose after the reign of demons, it might have been truly said, nothing more happy than man in the attainment of the beatitudes, or more humble in the accomplishment of their law. The deeds of heathen virtue cannot stand the test of the Catholic standard. "That Lucretia should have chosen death," says St. Augustin, "argued not the charity of modesty, but the infirmity of shame. This was a Roman woman, too greedy of praise. Christian women would not have done this who live after suffering such things, who neither punish others in themselves nor add a crime of their own to the crime of others."§ The detestable iniquity of Junius Brutus was useless to the republic, although to perpetrate this crime,

"Vicit amor patriæ laudemque immensa cupido."

St. Augustin, in two lines, reveals the whole difference between the Christian chivalry and the ancient heroic character, but it is a separation as wide as between heaven and earth; "for the latter," he says, "did not love glory on account of justice, but seemed to love justice on account of glory."|| It is useless, however to remain here any longer; let us proceed, though we shall have to enter upon a more painful investigation, having to point out the contrast between Catholic

\* Heinsii Orat. XVII.

§ De Civ. Lib. I. 19.

† De Civ. Dei, Lib. 1. 32.

‡ Id. Lib. II. 14.

|| Id. Lib. V. 22.

manners, the manners of faith, which prevailed during the ages involved in this history, and those of the modern societies, which have abandoned that faith for views and principles which they pronounce to be more worthy of highly civilized and enlightened men. "Morality, at present, is better understood," says the great master of our age, whose fables are recommended by ministers of Germany, as the best sources of religious instruction. If so, our whole course hitherto must have led you, reader, in a false direction; but the facts and observations which I propose to offer, will enable, I conceive, every impartial judge to discover the fallacy of that opinion. When the new religions were first set up publicly in Christendom, it was little thought by those who changed the rule of faith, that the rule of manners was also to be revolutionized. It is true there were some wise heads, which predicted that this would be inevitably the final result; and it is certain, that in practice there was already an abundant ground to fear that their predictions would be verified. Even at the first moment, when it was proposed to introduce into a Christian community the fatal principle of the innovators there were signs of the future ruin.

"Instamus tamen immemores, cæcique furore,  
Et nonstrum infelix sacrata sistimus arce."\*

As Pindar says, "The credible and incredible are often confounded for a time, but the days which succeed are the most certain witnesses."† Those witnesses have been heard, and great indeed must be the weakness and obscurity of the mind which still waits for more. The kind of readers who choose such matter as that which I indite, for subject of their thoughts, men bred to gentle studies, and accustomed to the sweet sounds of divine philosophy, are in general but little acquainted with the facts to which we must now briefly allude, and still less inclined to attend to those who speak of them. The detail of such manners as distinguished the chief agents in the revolution of the sixteenth century, can but seldom arrest the thoughts of men who enjoy the ineffable charms of calm meditation on truths of eternal interest, and of infinite sublimity: philosophy leads men to other walks. What is it to the Christian church whether she be opposed by a Trajan or a Nero? under a senate assembling in the forum, or under a new race of priests teaching a different doctrine, seated in her own ancient temples? She calls upon her children to withdraw themselves from the things that pass with time, and leave the dead to bury their dead. But in order to show what was the justice of the ages of faith, some retrospect of the men who hastened their decline becomes necessary, and with whatever reluctance one may turn from the spectacle of a renovated to that of a fallen and still prostrate world, it is well to form an estimate of that system of morality which was made to supersede the ancient manners of the original universal society of Christians.

\* Virg. *Æn.* II. 244.

† Olymp. I.

Hastening then our steps as those who find their path beset with objects of disgust or terror, we find ourselves at first in fearful company, surrounded with the routiers or soldiers, resembling the liberating armies of our time, men without faith or law, impious as the troops that have lately ravaged Portugal and Spain under the influence of the modern opinions, for they are the creation of an opinion, and barbarous as the wildest savages. Those men were in the service of the early heretics, who first gave note of coming evils; and what sort of reform think you, reader, could those who employed such instruments have had at heart? Michelet says, that to judge by some facts, their history might be read in that of the mercenaries of antiquity, in the execrable war against Carthage.\* It is important to bear in mind, that the present systems which were established on the abolition of the ancient faith arose at an epoch of horrible fame in the history of mankind. It was during the execrable reign of gold, during the hunger and thirst after riches, when avarice had quenched the love of good, without which is no reform possible, that the religious constitution of so many states gave way. Observe, that the agents of the change were men not who resisted, but who followed the spirit of their age. The history of them all may be summed up by saying, that they were in the van of their generation, and worthy of being so; with justice and freedom ever on their tongue, they only availed themselves of the elements which they found already prepared in a corrupt society, like the Pedros and Christinas of later times.

"Surely," says a keen observer, a child of justice who found means in a foreign land to make his voice be heard in justification of wisdom, "surely, if a man should ask Murray and Morton, those two pillars of reformation in Scotland, Orange and Horn in the Netherlands, Conde and the Admiral in France, the dukes of Somerset and Northumberland in England, the princes of Saxony, Sweden, and Denmark, and the rest of the Lutheran chiefs in Germany, whether they had not some by-ends of avarice, ambition, and other sinister and worldly nature, when they seemed to be most hot and zealously transported, it might trouble them all perhaps what to answer."† What may the self-commissioned messengers say unto the captain of the church when they shall see that volume spread to view, in the which all their dispraise is written? There amidst the actions of that king who first made Alfred's renowned isle apostate, shall be read, of despotism, of unprincipled ministers, of a rapacious aristocracy, of a servile parliament. There shall be read the thirsting pride that made fool alike the English and the Scot, impatient of the winged yoke, there shall be seen the anatomy of that work which was begun by the murderer of his wives, continued by the murderer of his brother, and completed by the murderess of her guest. The new evangelists shall see recorded there their table-talk, their thrice transmitted wives, and all the filthy doings from which they came flushed, to tread

\* Hist. de France. II. 432.

† Jerusalem and Babel, I. 113.



down like dogs and swine the holy things and pearls of the faith. They of Norway too, and the Dane, with the feudal lords of Saxony and those who ruled Zurich and Berne, who would not suffer provisions to be supplied to the Catholic inhabitants of the mountain and forest cantons, shall be exposed with them who counterfeited ill the coin of Henry, and caused groans and wailings in the streets which once were blest with the feet of holy men that ran dispensing peace. Those whose minds have attained to that high and delicate sense of justice which belongs to the ages of faith, may not only be unwilling but even actually unable to explore this history. The agent at this epoch, whether the mere instrument of others' passions, the ignoble and insane preacher, or the sly potentate who with interested motives encouraged and promoted him, is a character which they can hardly estimate; for according to the sublime idea of the poet, we may say truly that to their eyes he is invisible, such a cloud of crimes envelopes him.

*τοῖον ἐπὶ κνέφας ἀνδρὶ μύθος πεποταται.\**

It will be sufficient, however, to show that from the time when morality is said to have become better understood, the manners of those who embraced the new opinions were very different from those which had formerly distinguished men who hungered and thirsted after justice. In proposing such a retrospect, I feel no alarm lest I should offend any person; for the vulgar and irascible crowd comes not here to feed. I seek to give pain to no one, much less to those whose genius and disposition to embrace every kind of good, I have always been accustomed to admire, and in whose manly and generous natures I well know may be realized so many bright, enchanting hopes of youthful friendship. To contrast the young wanderers on the erring way within these islands, with any class of men at present immediately around them, would not, perhaps, be the part of one who loves heroic and divine antiquity.

There are many who suppose themselves Protestants, without knowing on what grounds that title rests, whose thoughts and sentiments might be compared to the fresh current of a gentle living stream which it is always delightful to pass near, even though one must not follow its deviations; and on the other hand, there are persons who have never borne the name of protestors against the ancient faith, whose mind resembles either a turbid current or dull pool, stagnant and infectious, that can neither renew the earth nor reflect heaven. This whole discourse is concerning either the past,—and what is there in the dark, wretched years which have elapsed since the first apostacy which should render its praise displeasing to a young and unpolluted race,—or that new offspring with which God continually fecundates His church; a class, which must include themselves if they would follow where all that is noble and profound hath fled. These true lovers of wisdom will therefore not be quick to take offence at words which only

\* Æschyl. Eumenid. 378.

invite them to proceed on to this peace. They will feel that it would be insane to identify an accusation against historic personages, or against principles, with a stupid attempt to depreciate any of the generous men who in the shade of private life may now, through ignorance and the mysterious order of Providence, be following, externally at least, in the track of the horrid processions which had passed, as it were, through the night of history, spreading terror and desolation around it, and breaking the sweet stillness of a redeemed, or rather new-created world, with the terrific sound of civil and religious wars—spectral-like and ghastly procession, of which at present, only the memory seems to remain, excepting that one beholds the fearful wreck with which it has strewed the earth, and some innocent captives whom that foul crew has left spell-bound and miserably attached to the different objects that lined its way. Were we to view history with the eyes of modern speculators, there would be no place for the present argument ; for the founders and propagators of the new opinions in religion and in morals were, according to them, amongst the salt of the earth. But thus do all such men. If their purgation did consist in words, they are as innocent as grace itself. But the light seems again to dawn, at least to a considerable class of readers, upon history, and it is no longer possible to support the new opinions by ascribing to their founders that attribute of justice which in common with ourselves they are obliged to believe one of the distinguishing marks by which may be known the church of Jesus Christ. The world begins to remark, that wherever these men pretended to weed, nothing appeared after them but briars and thorns. If the house of Luther had been the vine of the Lord, and the men of Calvin his pleasant plant, the eternal course of Providence would have been retrograde, for then in ages of grace and after the Messiah, it might be said that he looked for judgment and behold iniquity, for justice and behold a cry.

What sort of converts the innovators generally made in France, may be learned from referring to any of the contemporary writers. Paradin, in his epistle prefixed to his history of Lyons, addressed to the consuls and syndics of that city in the year 1573, appeals to them in these terms. "It is notorious that since these new religions, if open force ought to be named religion, have been introduced into France, all estates have become corrupt: youth without discipline, old age without examples ; all kinds of blasphemy, vice, and enormity, are the fruits of these novel opinions. 'Exitus acta probat.' " Again in his history, speaking of their having demolished the churches of St. Just, of St. Irenæus, and the Abbey of the Isle-Barbe, he exclaims, "Would to God that they had built living temples of manners and virtues as they have reduced to ruin and desolation these dead stones which offended no one."\* Most remarkable also in this respect, are the letters of another magistrate, Stephen Pasquier;† but the learned reader will for himself find abundant and equally curious evidence, so that we need not delay

\* Hist. de Lyon, Lib. II. 106.

† Lib. IV. 12.

here. The moral deterioration, the exuberance of crime and woe which ensued in Germany and England, is a fact which is confirmed even by the testimony of the chiefs themselves. Fountainhall said in the time of James the Second, "God raises up men to appear for the Protestant interest, who were not very strict in any religion."\* In fact he might have said, who fly all disciplines, like Epicurus.

The German nobles who came forward as the protectors of Luther, and with whom he eventually sided against the oppressed peasants, were robber knights who knew of no justice or authority but the sword. It would have been a curious scene to have been present in the castle on the Rhine at the theological dialogue between Frank von Sickingen who could not read, and the other famous knight who espoused the reform, when the real question which concerned them was how to plunder their neighbor, the bishop of Treves. The wild boars of Arden were in no age tender to spare the vineyard of the church. Without attempting to examine who are the Frank von Sickingens that have come most forward in modern times as champions of that cause, defending the preachers with pamphlets from their feudal castles, and holding up the sword to those who are not satisfied with their logic, one may be permitted to observe that the existence of the religion which they espoused at this day, is a proof that the order of Providence must have required a continued series of the same men; for it is a law of nature that things should exist and prevail only by adhering to the principle of their existence. Mahometanism, which was essentially barbarous, and having conquest for its object, no sooner attempted in Spain to become cultivated and peaceful, than it was vanquished and driven out. Similarly, a religion which is essentially a principle of separation, disunion, and destruction, connected with the misrepresentation and injustice in which it originated, can only endure by the transmission and exercise of the same spirit; and whenever a tendency to Catholic union, and a desire to build up in imitation of Catholicism, whenever a love of justice in charity shall begin to supersede the original virulence, the thing, under whatever name it may be distinguished, will not only be "in danger," but will necessarily and irremediably expire.

The teachers of the new doctrines were guilty from the beginning of that irrational complaint which Socrates ridicules in the sophists, who, when they pretended to teach men virtue, would yet often accuse their own disciples of ingratitude and injustice towards themselves, as having received great benefit from them without making them any return or stipend or grace. So that they admit those to be evil whom they have rendered good. "What greater absurdity than this?" asks the Athenian sage.† Burton was one of those moralists who forget that men cannot always justly complain of the things which they may lament. It is a remedy, indeed, for the evil on which he treats to read the lamentations which he pours forth on the want of patronage which his fellow-divines and

\* State Trials, XI: 1175.

† Plato, Gorgias.



university-men endured. "Tell them 'tis a sin," saith he, speaking of their patrons, who spoil the new legal church, "they will not believe it; denounce and terrify; they have cauterized consciences. Call them base, irreligious, profane barbarians, pagans, atheists, epicures, as some of them surely are 'Euge! optime,' they cry, and applaud themselves for having money—a base, profane, epicurean, hypocritical rout. Let them pretend what zeal they will, their bones are full of epicurean hypocrisy and atheistical marrow: they are worse than heathens."\* You observe, reader, that the scene which is now passing before our eyes has been acted before. Avoiding, however, as far as possible, the unpleasant task of accusation, let us only observe those features of the morality of our Catholic ancestors which present a striking contrast to the principles or conduct of the men who pretended to have more enlightened views of justice, and who substituted new opinions in religion for the ancient faith. Who is there then that does not anticipate me in bearing testimony in the first place to their singular love of truth? Open any of these volumes written by men of the middle ages. What candor, what conscience, what industry, what distrust of themselves, what unnecessary revelations of secret assistance do you find in them? "Reader," says John Vasæus of Bruge, "you are besought to look favorably on these my labors, which were not moderate, and to admonish me candidly of my faults, and with a sincere mind; for you will always find me prepared to commence a pallinode of those things which I have written, and that, not without honorable mention of those by whom I have been justly and benevolently admonished."† Similar to this preface to a Spanish chronicle, is the style of introduction to all the old Catholic works of literature or philosophy. Hear how the illustrious Richard of St. Victor speaks in his work on the Trinity. "I shall take it most gratefully and count it for a great gift, if any truth uttered by me less properly or fittingly should be explained in more appropriate and fitting language by another."‡ Witness again the great Benedictines of a later age. Dom Beaugendre confesses humbly in the preface to his work that the notes have been reviewed and corrected by Massuet; and Dom Raimond de la Motthe assists De Saussai in his Martyrology of France, and Mabillon in his Acts of the Benedictines, without ever desiring that his name should be associated with their glory, content to employ himself in obscurity for the establishment of truth and the utility of the church. § Muratori finds in the ancient historians during the ages of least erudition, "a lucid narrative of events and deeds conjoined with a love of truth;"|| and you need only open any of their treatises intended for general instruction, such as the work of Iona de Institutione Laicale, to be convinced that as in the twenty-seventh chapter of

\* Lib. I. 3.

† Joannis Vasæi Brugensis Rer. Hispanicarum Chronic. cap. 7.

‡ De Trinitate, Pars I. Lib. IV. c. 11.

§ Bibliothéque Hist. et Critique des Auteurs de la Congreg. de St. Maur, p. 5.

|| In Script. Rer. Ital. Præfat.

the second book of those Institutes, they were in regard to truth heroic. "Cavendum omnibus modis mendacium," say the canons collected by Ives de Chartres, "sive pro malo, sive etiam pro bono præferri videatur."\* "That I have satisfied the first rule of an historian by an inviolable regard to truth, I can say without boasting," says Trithemius, "since the monastic profession and Christian faith both compel me to hold falsehood in horror as that which kills the soul."†

"A religious man," says S. Bonaventura, "must avoid not only a lie, but even whatever may have the shadow of it, as hyperboles, confidence, exaggeration, equivocations, and all manner of leading men into error."‡ To play ironically with men the counterpart of Plato's type, who combined in sovereign degree power and injustice, I said was lawful, in a former book, for which some few years past some English critics, catching at the word equivocate, and producing certain Gallican authorities, deemed it for once worth their while to mention the publication of this work, which they registered as teaching heresy, and therefore let the present page be a sign to undeceive whoever doubts the motive of my words. What a horror of falsehood and dissimulation is evinced by all the great standard authors of the middle ages, as in that ladder of Paradise by St. John Climachus, who shows in the same sentence that there was nothing deceitful in the meekness and gentleness of the just, "nihil in illis invenitur callidum," saith he, "nihil durum, nihil simulatum."§ They wrote with a constant sense that God, not the literary public, was to be the judge of their sentences. "We shall endeavor to relate the life of our father Columban," says Iona of Bobbio, "which shone in these latter ages, 'erit tamen nostrorum arbiter dictorum virtutum Largitor immensus.' "|| Observe, too, the manners of that lay society which followed the chivalrous models. "The refinement to which the principle of honor was carried," says a modern author, "affords many interesting traits of the purest and most admirable regard to truth; and some of the histories of celebrated knights inspire us with delight at the pictures they occasionally give of this devotion." Dante speaks as a knight of these ages, and not merely as a theologian, when he says,

— "Ever to that truth  
Which but the semblance of a falsehood wears,  
A man if possible, should bar his lips,  
Since although blameless he incurs reproach."¶

A captain of the middle ages would have been eternally dishonored who should have sent emissaries with false intelligence in order to secure the destruction of an enemy that only sought to fly, as in the instance recorded by Thucydides.\*\* Bold bad men can be found indeed in their annals. A certain cardinal, after a long

\* Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XIII. 50.

† In Chronic Hirsaugiensis

‡ S. Bonaventura, Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 21.

§ Scala Paradisi Grad. XII. Grad. I.

|| Act. Sanct. Ord. S. Bened. Tom. II.

¶ Hell. XVI.

\*\* Lib. VII. 73.

conversation with Henry the Second of England, gave this testimony of him, "Never did I see a man so courageous to lie,"\* But under the influence of the modern civilization, it would not be easy to institute a comparison between the different aspirants of that kind of valor whose numbers are so great, and whose claims so equal. Assuredly it argues no prejudice in favor of the middle ages to assert that they were not characterized by that wild excess of insolence which generates a mockery of oaths, and a systematic indifference to truth. Frederick Schlegel makes some profound reflections respecting this dreadful evil which desolates the modern society. "What an effect," saith he, "must such a disposition produce upon the character of a nation? What a power is in lies when an age arrives which is estranged from truth, and which detests truth; when fraud in every conscience leaves a sting, and the spirit of lying, the death of souls, becomes the spirit of the age?†

We need not refer to philosophers for proof or illustration of that power. The events which pass around us now attest it; for deeds which less bespeak the nature of the lion than the fox, have triumphed, and ways of winding subtilty been conducted with such art that the sound has reached the world's limit. It is by dissimulation, flattery, falsehood, various tongues, horrible languages, accents of anger, words that are serpent all, which seem taught by him of whom 'tis said he is a liar, and the father of lies, that the modern civilization, as far as it is opposed to Catholic manners and institutions, spreads over Europe, and sweeps away all before it. Ah, what fierce cruelty do these looks bespeak! What tongues are these that syllable speak none, but with ireful gestures angry scorn? This is not reckless passion, reader, but the subtle art which has ever ministered to evil. How are kings who would protect the church, and are, for its sweet sake, the idols of the people, to be deposed and driven out, and nations that would support them to be invaded, under the guise of neutrality, by mercenary armies? institutions the most holy and venerable, intimately associated with true national glory, and most beneficial to the poor, to be suppressed for sake of plunder, under pretence of relieving the state? It is by means of calumnies shouted together by the cursed crew of all who seduce with lies; for when brute force and evil will are backed with subtilty, resistance non avails. From the surface this diabolic contagion passes into the heart of society, and taints domestic life. To read falsehood with composure, and to retail it with avidity, is hardly considered reprehensible; and loquacity is not now so much a certain proof of ignorance, according to the definition of the ancient ascetic, as it is an indication of men having come fresh from their daily banquet of licensed calumnies, where-with they ne'er enough can glut their tongues. Finally, it is the same power which is employed to perpetuate heresies and schism. Indifference to truth, under the mask of loving it, is the accomplishment most needed when coffers must

\* Epist. S. Thom. 566.

† Philosophie des Lebens, 220.



be filled. Youth is told that it is entitled to examine for itself, and to follow its own judgment, but with an especial proviso, that it is never to exercise that privilege. The system may be false, but as men's wealth or means of life depend upon their supporting it, they must ask no questions that can raise a doubt, read no books, consort with no man that would present the argument of the opposite side; and thus the maxim of the Gentiles is daily verified—

*χρυσός δὲ κρείσσων μυρίων λόγων βροτοῖς.\**

O heavens, what a wreck is here of all honor and justice—of all the old sentiments of loyalty and faith! The age of chivalry is past, we are told, and does it not seem as if the age of truth had departed with it? Indeed the phenomena of the moral world at present can surprise no philosopher who traces the modern established systems to their source, for they were framed and set up by vessels of all guile, whose spirit would naturally descend to their posterity. Strype and many others can bear witness to the antiquity of the seductive art in conducting attacks against the Catholic religion in England. Hear but the reasoning of the celebrated Burton. "The worst Christians of Italy," says he, "are the Romans, the worst Romans are the priests, the worst priests are the cardinals, and the worst cardinal is the pope, who is generally an epicure, an infidel, a Lucianist." This, it will now be thought, is over bold, but the representations made of Catholic institutions, and of Catholic men at the present day, though in a more specious language, prove only a greater proficiency in that art which the men of the middle ages have shown they were not skilled to learn. Again, history, with the melancholy comment furnished by contemporary deeds, sufficiently proves that an extremely delicate sense of justice, that nice and exquisite sensibility which characterized the ages of which St. Louis was the type, the model and representative, is not a characteristic of those who follow the banners on which reformed church, or march of reason, is inscribed. What city, or what mortal, nourishing no sentiment in the light of the heart, would revere justice? This is what Æschylus demands.† He does not ask what city or mortal possessed of useful knowledge, or cultivating science in the depth of the understanding? Admirable testimony to the truth of our philosophy, which teacheth that it is with the heart man believeth unto justice.

To witness how the modern opinions can falsify the reason and diminish the sense of justice, one need only attend to any of these great legislative proceedings where questions at issue between the modern constitutions or religious establishments, and the followers of the ancient faith, are agitated. If what we continually hear or read, were said and written by others, as Cicero exclaims, if in the name of the people, of the multitude of ignorant citizens, one would endure it with an equal mind, we might pass on without noticing it; but when we find it proceeding

\* Medea, 962.

† Eumenid, 522.

from senators and nobles who should have honor and justice ever before their eyes, and who certainly are in so many respects in a position favorable to the possession of heroic virtue, one cannot but feel curious to investigate the cause of such a phenomenon, and perhaps the explanation is not difficult. The order on which the Christian society depended has been disturbed during three centuries by the great fact of the usurpation of the spiritual by the temporal power. This monstrous deed, which attacked civilization in its most vital part, has been developed throughout Europe by maxims of egotism, the spirit of monopoly, the abuse of force, and by all means drawn from self-interest in despite of the sentiments of justice. This has introduced confusion into the ideas and morality of the world, and corrupted political men of all nations, making them suppose that the want of principles could be removed by wills, and that parliamentary acts could supply the place of moral laws. When order is violated in its most elevated principle, it can exist no longer any where. One may easily conceive that in youth the reason is vitiated by being taught to combine things essentially irreconcilable, and to consider it as enlightened religion to substitute contradiction in terms for faith. Men may protest against inferences, but they cannot conceal the leading passions of the human mind ; the system to which so many still cling, was originally calculated more to satisfy the ends of Machiavelian politicians, or to feed the vanity and revenge of clever, passionate men at a particular moment, than to satisfy in all ages the wants of a just and innocent intelligence. Children feel the inconsequence and inconsistency of a thousand things imposed upon them ; they hear contradictory assertions from the same mouths, and they learn to arrange them as they can in their heads. When grown to man's estate,

"Rumor and the popular voice  
They look to more than truth ; and so confirm  
Opinion, ere by art or reason taught."\*

Hence the intellectual conscience being corrupted, the moral sense is not slow to follow. The strange atrocious doctrines, which are on so many tongues, respecting both private morals and the conduct of nations, can only be explained by the natural disposition of man to justify faults committed by sophistical reasoning, and when through pride he has established himself, in contradiction with moral laws, to seek an extension of his empire by producing around him interests analogous to his own. Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill. It may be truly said that we have even corrupted and falsified languages, in order to diminish the horror of many evils. *Vera rerum vocabula amisimus*, as Cato says in *Salust*. Moreover, rationalism, which was in truth the principal heresy of later times, by giving the rein to the passions, and by suppressing supernatural aids, leaves the judgment exposed to every contingency. The humility, and self-

\* *Purg.* XXVI.

control, and chastity of the ages of faith, imparted prodigious perspicuity to the understanding of men. Their rule of deciding debates, as also that of the moderns, may be collected from St. Bernard, "Amor sicut nec odium, veritatis judicium nescit; vis judicium veritatis audire? Sicut audio sic judico: non sicut odi, non sicut amo, non sicut timeo."\* The latter is the rule of the modern disputants on such topics, when their passions and hereditary prejudices are concerned: they are then like Hotspur, without his provocation,

"Tying their ear to no tongue but their own."

In public life and political relations, we find in individuals the same deficiency. The most fierce champions of liberty were ready to flatter rich men, and to sell themselves like the Coryphee of that party whose name is held sacred, showing plainly by their deeds that they were only freedom's hypocrites. The race of rival demagogues did but again appear on the world's stage, of whom it might be said, in the words of Aristophanes, that they acted likes those who fish for eels; for if the pool is calm they take nothing, but when they stir the mud up and down, they catch prizes; so they caught when they excited the city.† Like the two slaves in Plautus, they were sure, if let alone to expose their mutual crimes, and thus praise one another in a manner worthy of their genius.‡ Sycophants, whether of despots, or of the people, were alike abhorrent from Catholic manners. It was not a professor of the new theology, or a "liberal, exalted statesman," but a father of the church, and a Catholic philosopher, who said, that "they who present panegyrics to the rich ought to be considered not only as flatterers, and men illiberal, but also as impious persons and conspirators, who prevent rich men from discovering the way of safety, by contributing to their pride."§ It was not a Bacon, the "reformer of philosophy," but a Spanish bishop of the middle ages, who defined panegyric to be "a licentious and lascivious kind of speech in praise of kings, in which men are flattered with many lies."||

The middle ages beheld holy men who could inspire tyrants and the enemies of the poor with fear and compunction; not men who professed themselves in banqueting to all the rout, who were always held to be dangerous by the wise, but persons who meditated on the divine law; who read much, thought much; who were great observers, and who looked quite through the deeds of men. Such a senator was a true lover of his country and incorruptible. He was, according to the Thucydidean sentence,

*φιλόπολις τε καὶ χρημάτων κρείσσων.*¶

The constancy of such men will stand proof, if tried with such as have more show of worth, of honor, glory, and popular praise, rocks whereon greatest men have oftenest wrecked.

\* Grad. Humilitatis.

† Equites.

‡ Asinari, Act III. 2.

§ Clemens Alexand. Lib. Quis dives salvetur, I. || Isidori Etymolog. Lib. VII. 7. ¶ II. 60.



An illustrious French writer who occasionally speaks with injustice of the manners of the middle ages, says of his countrymen, in a work recently published, that they have now public morals.\* Nevertheless, whatever sense may be attached to these words, methinks one must still remain convinced that, if the wisdom of the ages of faith, before morality was so well understood, as the great modern author says, could be heard amidst the uproar and confusion of modern deliberative, or, as they are more justly termed, representative assemblies, it would maintain the importance, even in a political point of view, of preserving the old Catholic manners, under whatever system of government might be established. Milton, although no prophet, to have the same facilities for judging as ourselves, nevertheless saw enough to feel strange suspicions. "Can men," he asks, "become all at once the legislators of a nation who have never learnt what law means, what reason, what is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful? Who think that all power consists in violence, dignity in pride and haughtiness?"† Our Catholic legislators did not suppose themselves like Noah, who awoke from his wine, and immediately prophesied. They were frugal, temperate, austere, and mortified men, practising the fasts and abstinence of the holy Catholic church, and often even exceeding what she required. They were not pedants or braggadocios in legislation, offering to prove the justice and honor of their public measures at the point of the sword; they were not sold to the Jews, and estimating the virtue of their measures by the bulletins of an exchange, and the profit of those who haunted it. Consider the Venetian republic and the assembly of its senators, in which not he who had most wealth but who had most virtue was the first. "If you behold the council," says Benedict Aretino, "you would no longer exclusively admire the Roman senate. There you would see grave and moderate men; there you would observe with what gravity and decorum, and erudition, a grave question was discussed. You would find among them nothing vain, nothing light, nothing unworthy; and if he who seems the greatest were to betray any insolence, you would see him immediately become the least of all. The public welfare is their only concern, to promote which they labor with intense application. Who could relate all their glorious deeds? who could enumerate all their just, and wise, and eloquent men?"‡

William of Poitiers says that, during the time of William the Conqueror, Normandy had in its assemblies, besides the bishops and abbots, men of the laical order, most eminent, who were the light and brilliant ornament of the council. Robert count of Mortain, Robert count of Eu, father of Hughes, bishop of Lisieux, Richard count of Evreux, Roger of Beaumont, Roger of Mont-Gomeri, William son of Osbern, and the Viscount Hughes. These men, by their wisdom and ability, preserved their country from dangers.§

\* Chateaubriand, *Discours Hist.* Tom. IV. III. † Second Defence of the People of England.

‡ De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog. Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, IX.

§ De præstantia virorum sui ævi Dialog. Thesaur. Antiq. Italiæ, 387.

In England and France during every reign, there were men of this character, the pride and ornament of history. When they took the charge of public affairs, it was from a love of justice and from charity, not from a regard to the interest of any political party in the state, and still less of their families or of themselves. "The Pythagorean discipline is said to have banished sedition and discord, and all study of parties, not only from among its disciples, but also from all the cities of Italy and Sicily."\* What is admired as flowing from philosophy, should not be condemned or passed over in disdain, when it had its origin in the principles of the Catholic religion. "There are some," says Hugo of St. Victor, "who know how, and can, and wish to command; there are others who know how, and can, but who are unwilling; there are again others who neither know how, nor can, nor are willing. To know how and to be able and willing, is of charity or of pride; to know how and to have the power but to be unwilling, is of humility or of sloth; neither to know how nor to be able but to wish, is of cupidity and folly; neither to know how, nor to be able nor willing, is of discretion and providence."† It would not be difficult to determine to which of these divisions we should refer the statesmen of Catholic and perhaps modern times. An absolute horror of ambition characterized the middle ages. Innumerable are the instances which they furnish of men renouncing, and of exercising power solely through the love of justice, and of fulfilling what they owed to God. Nor should we overlook the affecting lamentations of others who recognized the perils of their situation in supreme power. King John of Arragon dying at Barcelona, after receiving all the sacraments and hearing the Passion and the seven psalms, remained silent, and being cold they thought him dead, but suddenly opening his eyes, he cried out, "O the vain thoughts of men! O the misery of those who seek prince-doms, and affect riches and honors! O happy the poor, and their secure and blessed life, who eat their bread in the sweat of their faces, and who live with the labor of their hands! For what hath a kingdom, what have honors and the respect of many profited wretched me? What have so many labors and such dangers of body and soul? O wretched man, who hast learned so late the deceit of the world, and who would certainly have lived a better life if, instead of being a king, he had been a poor cultivator of the ground." His brother Alfonso dying at Naples, had expressed himself nearly in the same words.‡

The one house of the Signori della Scala can show a succession of six princes who all evinced by their deeds an absence of ambition. Witness that great Albert, elected after the downfall of the tyrant Eccelino, duke of Verona, by the whole people, "in honor of God and of his blessed mother and all the saints, and for the welfare of the city," as the original instrument states, who governed with

\* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 7.

† Hugo S. Vict. de Claustro Animæ, Lib. II. c. 12.

‡ Lucii Marinæi Siculi de Rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. XVIII.

such humility and mercy, adorned the city with so many magnificent and religious monuments, cheered and refreshed the long-oppressed people with so many splendid festivities, and died so lamented, that all the citizens spontaneously clothed themselves in black, and suffered their beards to grow during the space of a whole year ; who, after governing the state twenty-three years with the utmost glory, charged his sons on his death-bed to bury him without an epitaph in the church of St. Mary the ancient. Witness again his son and successor, Bartholomeo, of most benignant and pacific disposition, the friend rather of the people than of the nobility, devoted to religion, visiting the churches, assisting daily at mass, so charitable that the poor in crowds used to await his rising from table, when all that remained on it used to be distributed among them, and who, after his truly Christian life and a short reign, commanded at his death, that he should have the funeral of a private man ; which orders were obeyed, when all the poor of the city followed, weeping and lamenting the loss of their father ; to whom succeeded his brother, Alboino, another meek, pacific man, so that his youngest brother, Can Francesco, was associated with him in the government, for the conduct of military operations, who was afterwards known as Can Grande, whom Dante praised as the great Lombard who received him in his exile, who also evinced a noble preference of virtue to ambition, for having promised Alboino, on his death-bed, that his sons should succeed, as he himself wanted legitimate male issue, immediately on his brother's death, assumed Albert, the eldest of his nephews, as his associate in the government, which act of fidelity endeared him to the people, who knew how he loved his own sons. This Albert showed himself equally remote from ordinary ambition, for on the death of his uncle Can Grande, he might have succeeded alone to the supreme power, since at the last ratification of their government at Milan, before the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria, there had been added an express clause, that when one of the ruling princes died without a son, the other should succeed him without an associate. Nevertheless, he chose to follow the custom of his ancestors, and accordingly assumed Mastino, his younger brother, for his colleague in the government, to whom he soon gave up the whole power, retaining nothing for himself but the veneration and love of the people ; and when Mastino died, he caused his own son, the second Can Grande, to be proclaimed, who on his father's death, which followed shortly after, furnished the last proof of the virtue which had distinguished his family, by refusing to take anything from the people, but what his father had left him ; with whom perished all the greatness of that house, which thenceforth furnished only memorable examples to mankind of divine justice in avenging a brother's murder.\*

Let it not be forgotten that during the middle ages both owing to the general prevalence of Catholic manners, and also to the peculiar organization of society, it was often the most just, the most religious men, who attained to the

\* Torelli Saraynæ Hist. et Gesta Veronensium, Lib. II. Thesaur. Antiq. Ital. IX.



chief power in the government of human affairs, and to the possession of the greatest influence in the direction of states. What modesty in Andrea Contareno, who would not accept the dignity of doge of Venice, until threatened with exile if he refused? What justice in the doge Michael Maurocenus, who would have put his own son to death in prison, if not prevented by the senators, for having seduced and betrayed a virgin?\*

To show the grandeur and immortal glory of the Venetian republic, Aretino deemed it enough to name one alone of her dukes, Francis Foscari, a man who for prudence, justice, humanity, and wisdom, might be fearlessly opposed to all antiquity.† What piety, innocence, and justice, marked the whole life of Octavianus Fulgosius, commander of Genoa, who amidst violent civil dissensions, was dear to men of all parties, and who, after resigning his authority, gave himself wholly to religion, becoming so venerable that the holy sovereign pontiffs corresponded with him.‡ Again, what legislative and political wisdom and justice, in every page of the old Spanish chronicles, recording the deeds and conversation of their kings! Read the discourse on the death of Alfonso the Magnanimous, seventeen king of Arragon, to Gabriel of Sorrentum, his familiar friend, or that which he addressed to his son Ferdinand, when the latter was going against the Florentines, in which he said, "Then only will military arts profit you, when you render God propitious to you by piety and deeds of justice."§

What an example of the same justice on a throne, in that Marquis Adelbert of Lucca, who died in 917, on whose tomb, containing also his wife Berta, in the cathedral of Lucca, you may read these verses in ancient characters :

" Hic populi leges, saxi, sub mole sepulchri,  
 Hic jus, paxque jacet, hic patriæ auxilium.  
 Hic cubat ala, scutum, dolor, lacrimæque repostæ ;  
 Hic oculus cæci, hic pietas viduæ,  
 Pes claudi, vestis nudi, solamen egeni,  
 Noster Adalbertus Dux pius atque bonus.  
 Quam fortis fuerit, noverunt ultima Tilæ;  
 Qua bonitate fuit, dicere lingua nequit.  
 In sexto decimo Septembre notante Calendas  
 Hic posuit membra a funereo gemitu.  
 Quisque legis tumulum, culparum facta suarum  
 Ante Deum recita, in precibusque juva. ||

The tomb of Winrich von Kniprode at Marienburg, upon which an armed knight is sculptured, is nearly consumed by time, so as hardly to exhibit any letters that are legible to indicate his name, "but," adds Voigt, "his virtues have raised him an imperishable monument in the memory of men, for his name can never be forgotten, as long as men shall retain any reverence for what is great and

\* Italia Sacra V. 1166.

† De præstant. virorum sui ævi.

‡ Uberti Folietæ clarorum Ligurum Elogia. Antiq. Italiæ, Tom. I.

§ Lucii Marinæi Siculi de Reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. XI.

|| Italia Sacra, I. 802.

noble. With the piety of a monk, he joined the wisdom of a legislator and the courage of a heroic warrior. No one ever wielded the sceptre and the sword with such advantage to his country." "Seldom," says John von Müller, "do we find in history the renown of the best of men associated along with that of being the most important and influential. In Winrich we have both."\* But though such examples, throughout the whole course of history are rare, they were sufficiently numerous during the middle ages, as to render them unlike all other epochs in the annals of mankind.

To nations preserving the traditions and manners of faith, the Catholic church might have truly applied the words of Minerva in *Æschylus*, and have predicted to them that wondrous and supernatural state of temporal felicity, which consisted not in the possession of a constitution more worthy of renown than that of Sparta, not in an exemption from the disorders and punishment consequent upon sin, but in the establishment and permanence of institutions admirably designed to satisfy the wants and to diminish the sufferings of humanity. "Doing this," she might have said, "you will have a state such as no other race of men possesses."

οὐτ' ἐν Σκυθήσιν, οὔτε Πέλοπος ἐν τόποις †

Let us, however, consider this national justice in detail. The political morals of the middle ages were not Machiavellian. Dante represents fraud as more hateful to God than force. The Anglo-Gallican system of non-intervention would have been deemed more odious than an open violence however unjust. Philip of Macedon, it was said, could deceive and captivate the prudence of the Phocians, the magnanimity of the Thebans, the manly virtue of the Lacedæmonians, the wisdom of Athens; this was an ability which would have won no honor in the heroic ages of our history.

The political science of the middle ages did not indicate a contempt for all sacred obligations. Varro, whom the ancients called a liberal, and whom Cicero styled a man most acute, *et sine ulla dubitatione doctissimus*, in his books treated first on human and afterwards on divine things, for which he assigned this reason, that cities existed before their institutions, so that divine things were instituted by men; as a painter existed before the picture, and the builder before the house, so did cities before their institutions. That the absurdity of such an opinion was sufficiently clear to men in the middle ages, may be witnessed in the first chapter of the constitution, framed at Genoa, on the restoration of its liberty, by Andrew Doria, which begins by setting forth that the future grandeur and happiness of the republic will depend upon the degree of reverence which it evinces for the Christian religion, and then charges in consequence all rulers and persons in authority to protect the clergy and the property of the monastic orders for the honor and security of the whole state.‡ John, King of Arragon, said at his death

\* Voigt. *Geschichte Preussens*, V. † *Eumenid.* 702. ‡ *Thesaurus Antiq. Italæ*, Tom. I.

to his son Ferdinand, who was to succeed him. "For the love of me, I ask and implore you that you will always prefer divine to human things. Let nothing be ever dearer to you than the worship of God, nothing higher in your eyes than virtue, and do nothing without the counsel of just men."\* There was then no kingdom or republic of which God was not considered the supreme ruler. Heinsius, though a disciple of the modern school, and one who admits that the power of no republic or kingdom is sufficiently great, unless there be a greater authority by which it may stand and fall, says that Plato was wise in pronouncing a king to be a human god in political relations.† It was one of the counsels of Fenelon to the Duke of Burgundy, in his plan for the government of France, to beware of the exorbitant opinion of the parliamentarians; and so little importance does Milton seem to attach to those provisions which are now thought so essential to every free and happy state, that he recommends an unchanging administration. "Although," he says, "it may seem strange at first hearing by reason that men's minds are possessed with the notion of successive parliaments, I affirm that the grand or general council, being well chosen, should be perpetual."‡ To the humble and unpretending statesmen of the middle ages, such an affirmation would not have seemed to argue greater wisdom than his invectives against kings.

"There should be a succession of magistrates," says Giles of Colonna, instructing Phillippe-le-Bel, "and places of dignity should not be always left with the same persons. Both in order that the justice of many citizens, which can only be tried by placing them in official situations, may be proved, that that idea of responsibility and of returning to private life may prevent persons in power from abusing it, and also that no one be despised from being always excluded, and so discontented and hostile to the government." Still we must distinguish here: the modern societies reckon public men among their best supporters. Public affairs engross much of their time; but the Catholics of the middle ages were like the primitive Christians, of whom Tertullian bears this testimony: "*Nobis nulla res magis aliena quam publica.*"§ It was not, therefore, with the Catholic monarchies of Europe as with the Greeks at the breaking out of the Peloponnesian war, when Thucydides says, "every one supposed that the greatest obstacle to the success of public affairs would be his own absence from them."|| Let there, however, be no mistake here. The Catholic religion inspired noble sentiments of personal freedom, and created states that were admirably designed for securing it to the subjects of an hereditary sovereign. "If any one," say the laws of the Visigoths, "should permit himself to be sold, in order afterwards to take advantage, and deceive the purchaser, let him not be heard, but he must remain in the servitude which he has chosen—*quoniam non est dignus ut liber sit qui se volens subdidit servituti.*"¶ The political maxim of the middle ages was that of Æschylus, "praise not anarchy or tyranny."

\* Lucii Marinæi Siculi de reb. Hispaniæ, Lib. XVIII.

† Orat. XVII.

‡ A ready and easy way to establish a free commonwealth, p. 902.

§ Apolog. 38.

|| Lib. II. 8.

¶ Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. V. tit. IV. 10.



*Μὴτ' αὐαρκτον βιον.  
μητε δεσποτου μένον  
αἰνέσης.\**

These governments did not indeed seek to persuade men that they were truly free ; because they had written on a piece of paper the word Liberty, and posted it up at all corners. Liberty, in the sense of ages of faith, was not a placard in a street. It was a living power, the protection of the domestic hearth, the guarantee of social institutions, and of individual habits. But, on the other hand, there was no attempt to represent the justice and Christianity of a people, as depending on the form of their government, or the merit of their political system ; there was no anarchy or confusion of degree. Domination, which enters of necessity into every form of efficient rule, was not considered despotism ; for, as Plato says, "He who has the power to govern, if any good is to come from him, must not ask the consent of those who are to be governed."† The words of St. Anselm, both in a political and moral point of view, were received as truth, when he said, "Posse Pecare non est libertas ; nec et pars libertatis." "I leave you free as to both men," said Marinus the hermit, in his last words to the citizens of the mountain republic bearing his name, of which, after flying from Dalmatia, during the persecution of Diocletian, he became the founder and legislator.‡ This was the idea of freedom nourished, and often realized in Catholic states. The Catholic spirit in general tended to ennoble infinitely the political character of man ; for as St. Augustin says, "pride tends to degrade and humiliate man by subjecting him to an equal, but pious humility makes him subject to a superior ; for there is nothing superior to God, and therefore humility exalts man which subjects him to God."§ Such were the Catholic notions of independence ; but the modern progress was then unknown, according to which, at first God and justice are taken from the minds of men, and then the legitimate prince is taken from the state, to make room for an odious and ignoble despotism, for wickedness never ceases where it begins, but as Pythagoras said, it is infinite, always encroaching and gliding on. How much did the Catholic doctrine and the doctrine of the reformers differ ? the former taught men to honor the king, to obey governors.

"As against the person of the prince," say the laws of the Visigoths, we forbid any one to practise violence, so do we prohibit any one to place on him a brand of crime, or to apply to him words of malediction ; for the authority of the sacred Scripture commands us to receive no opprobrious charge against our neighbor, and therefore, he who calumniates or speaks evil of the prince, is guilty ; so that, whoever accuses or calumniates the prince, instead of providing measures for having him humbly and secretly admonished of his life, and who shall presume, proudly and contumaciously, to insult his name, whether he be noble, priest, or laic, shall, on conviction, forfeit the half of his goods."||

\* Eumenid

† De Repub. VI.

‡ Italia Sacra, tom. II 884

§ De Civ. Dei. Lib. XIV. 13

|| Legis Wisigothorum. Lib. II. XII

"Not to wish to obey kings or laws," says Giles of Colonna, "is, according to ancient philosophers, and the saying of Homer, to be rather beasts than men, rather slaves than free." Such were the words of believers in the middle ages, and so deeply did they take root, that the sentiment of loyalty became universal, and associated in the minds of the people with every thing generous and manly. "To be convicted of rebellion against my prince," says Tasso, "would have involved me in a state of exile, not alone from Ferrara or Naples, but from the whole world. Excluded I should be from all friendship, and conversation, and knowledge, and comfort, from all grace, and in every place and time equally scorned and abominated: which punishment is so grievous, that if it were without hope, death, beyond all doubt, would not appear much greater; and, perchance, to a man brave and magnanimous, such as I recognize myself not to be it would be esteemed a much minor one."\* This was in conformity with the sentiments and manners of just men in all former times.

Socrates reminded his friend, who entreated him to fly from prison, and so escape the unjust persecutions of the government of his country, that wherever he went, if to an honorable people he would be regarded with just suspicion and aversion. If he were to seek an asylum at Thebes or at Megara, which are virtuous states, he would appear there as an enemy. As many as take an interest in the welfare of their countrymen would look upon him as a destroyer of the laws of his own country, and one whose escape and flight justified the charges that has been brought against him, of his being a corrupter of youth, for they would argue that whoever does his best to destroy the laws by endeavoring to prevent their execution, must necessarily be a corrupter of the young and of the unwise. If he were to fly to a country of wicked men, and of evil government, what advantage would he derive from life?†

It was the same in the time of St. Ambrose. Witness the words of the holy bishop to those who prepared to fly on the invasion of the Barbarians. "Let us suppose," he says, "that you have courage to endure the injuries of the journey. Tell me what liberty of life you will be able to enjoy among foreigners, when the moment you begin to speak it will be objected to you, 'Whence comes this exile? Whence is this fugitive? He wishes to oppress our state as he has injured his own!' Trust me, you are about to hear in foreign lands the same language which you have often used to others in your own."‡ I am not ignorant of the union of nations, which Christianity gradually effected, nor of the heroic and magnanimous deeds of mercy which were its fruit. Still it is curious to contrast this reasoning with the language of the sophists of our time, who regard all persons exiled, though for the greatest outrages against the institutions of their country, as men to be received with open arms, with triumph, and public applause, and who con-

\* Discorso sopra vari accidenti della sua vita scritto a Scipion Gonzaga. † Plat. Crito.

‡ S. Ambros. Serm. LXXXV.

sider such a reception to be the greatest proof of a nation's advance in civilization. To the agents of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century must the first avowal of such sentiments be traced. Although it may not shame their descendants to read a lecture of their recorded offences, we find amongst them one heinous article containing the lawless deposing of a king, and cracking the strong warrant of an oath, marked with a blot, damned in the book of heaven. They taught the people to oppress, if it had been oppressed, and to invade the republic in which it had served. So that at length, to be convicted of rebellion against a prince became a passport, which entitled the bearer to be received with the honors due to just men in every nation, in which the modern philosopher could boast of disciples. In this respect, indeed, the first founders of the school left little for those who came after them to bring to perfection.

"Princes," says Calvin, "deprive themselves of all power when they oppose God : (by which he meant the new doctrines ; ) and it is better in such cases to spit in their faces than to obey them," which irreverence yet he never learned from the example of any apostle. When the boors of Germany rose in rebellion, Luther wrote to censure them, but in such a manner as to inflame them more than ever.

"Know, Lords," says he to the German princes, "that God has so ordained, that they neither can, nor ought, to be subject to you." Knox would wish there were public rewards appointed for such assassins and murderers of tyrants, which there are for such as kill wolves.\* In a degree of greater or less fanaticism, the same spirit has distinguished the morality of their descendants to our time, for without appealing to the avowed doctrine of Sismondi, a later chief, their recent trophies, won with the tears and blood of Catholic nations, sufficiently demonstrate that they would not have esteemed Tiberius Gracchus to have been happier than his son, the former having studied to preserve the republic, the latter to overthrow it; and, perhaps, it would not be difficult, from marking the course and issue of their measures, to throw some light upon that passage in which Plato affirms, that the unjust man is more prosperous, more powerful, more liberal, and more commanding than the just—*οὕτως ισχυρότερον καὶ ἐλευθεριώτερον καὶ δεσποτικώτερον ἀδικία δικαιοσύνης ἐστίν, ἱκανῶς γιγνομένη*.†

I make no mention of some modern principles of political economy, which strike at the roots of the morality of the Catholic state, because in the judgment of all just men they should be put down, as Cicero says, not by any philosopher, but by a censor: "non est enim vitium in oratione solum, sed etiam in moribus." In general, we may remark, that in the inferior authors as well as actors of the middle and early ages, the foundation is always sound and incontrovertible, though they sometimes raise upon it, according to their fancy or habits, structures which seem at least to us wild and extravagant. With the moderns, on the con-

\* Jerusalem and Babel.

† De Repub. Lib. I.



trary, it is the foundation which is unsound and untenable, though by the force of nature, and the arts of a specious civilization, they may be able to form systems that have a semblance of propriety and worth. But leaving the subject of legislative and political justice, we are told to look around us in the modern society, and to observe what a progress general morality has made, and how few men can be found who, in their respective stations, are not worthy and honorable. I believe it may seem so—nothing is more probable: “*nisi enim ex comparatione virtutum,*” as St. Jerome says, “*vitium non ostenditur:*”<sup>\*</sup> but out of the pale of Catholicism we have only natural virtues, or else an exaggerated and irregular imitation of higher—the spirit of the duties exercised by the confraternities of the middle age being absolutely unknown; so that, although the Catholic discipline, in the estimation of the moderns, who are said to understand morality so well, was illiberal and constrained, the church continues to sing the words of David, “*narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, sed non ut lex tua.*” The French sophists of our time may claim Callicles as having been of their party, for in speaking to Socrates on one occasion, he adopts all their favorite opinions, and even uses their very words. “How facetious you are,” he says, “O Socrates, to call stupid men temperate. I affirm boldly, that whoever knows how to live well ought to give the rein to his desires, and not to curb them, and to give them whatever they demand; and it is because many are unable to do this that they calumniate those who act thus, and call them intemperate; and thus they enslave men of the best natures, and praise temperance and justice, through their own want of manliness. But, O Socrates, the truth is, that luxury, intemperance, and liberty, when there are means, give power and happiness, and these specious inventions, contrary to nature, are the ravings of the greatest men, only to be despised.”<sup>†</sup>

In all the minute details of life one can perceive the same contrast. The colloquial language of the people in Catholic countries, was not gross like that of Shakespeare’s “liberal shepherds,”<sup>‡</sup> as local histories and the details of popular festivities in the middle ages can bear witness. During the extravagant feast of the *Loup-vert* which was celebrated every year by the peasants of Jumieges, it was expressly enacted that at the supper if any one should utter an immodest word he was to pay a fine.<sup>§</sup> The laws of the Visigoths were so contrary to the modern ideas of a prudent police, that according to them all who furnished means to transgress the law of God were to be punished with three hundred lashes, and then to be banished from the city.<sup>||</sup> Such a measure would not be in harmony with the state of modern society, where after all the useful knowledge furnished, men who “take life’s rule from passions, craved for passion’s sake,” are more intemperate in their blood than those pampered animals that rage

\* Hom. Lib. I. com. in 9 Matt.

† Plato Gorgias.

‡ Hamlet, IV. 7.

§ Deshayes’ Hist. de l’Abbaye de Jumieges, 261.

|| Legis Visigothorum, Lib. III. tit. IV. 3.

in savage sensuality ! St. Clemens Alexandrinus speaks of persons enslaved by pleasure, wishing to disbelieve, who laugh at truths worthy of all veneration, and introduce barbarism into education.\*

Might not one suppose on reading these words that the Christian father, with prophetic eye, had seen the disciples of the modern school who, as travellers, artists, speculators and liberators, are now circulating like a secret and mortal venom through all the veins of the political state of Europe ? under whose cursed tread every thing innocent and holy withers !—every thing vile and deadly springs up as if called into being by a magician's wand, wherever they rest ? The stones of the sanctuary are dispersed ; the corruption of cities opens its tent in the desert. O bitter and humiliating reflection, to think that we should have lived to see a swarm like this taking possession of those Catholic heroic states which had resisted and rejected so long the prolific seeds. To think that such a race, legitimate offspring of the reform preachers by whom they are strengthened in their own esteem, should now be armed by authority, and sent as to a banquet to fight against the churches, gulled and spurred on by the usurers of the two cities which thrive by the blood of all the truly great and all the innocent, careless how many wretches die, provided their speculations may not fail ! But so it is, and the just reduced to silence are only looking around in vain for another Theseus to deliver humanity from creatures like the centaurs of old, that seem half man and half beast ! One point at all events is fixed under all phases of the modern civilization, for it forms disciples of whom we may affirm with truth, that they are men of no angelic feeling. Their standard is avowedly sensual, only a modified naturalism. Many of their classic productions are even obnoxious to the censure passed by Cicero upon those philosophers who speak of limiting concupiscentia, "*An potest cupiditas finiri ?*" he indignantly demands. "*Tollenda est atque extrahenda radicitus. Qualis ista philosophia est, quæ non interitum adferat pravitati, sed sit contenta mediocritate vitiorum ?*"† We read of our Saviour, when he was in the wilderness that the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him. "A great change," observes a modern writer, "in a little time."

Such is the case of every solitary soul. A musing mind will not stand neuter a minute, but presently side with legions of good or bad thoughts, and what is true in the case of an individual mind, is no less so with regard to society at large. The spiritual combat so familiar to the ages of faith, has been superseded in the imagination by a temporary calm, treacherous and ominous indeed, but most profound. The man who is now designated as possessed of enlightened views and of sound morality, when he contemplates himself, like him of whom we read in the Gospel on returning home, findeth his house swept and garnished, for through neglect of conscience and attention to vain superfluous and extrinsic things, he sees nothing defective there. While Luther was in his cloister, he suffered inter-

\* *Stromat. Lib. I. c. 3.*

† *Finibus. II. 9.*

nal agitation and diverse temptations ; when he gave the rein to his passions and became an apostate, he felt them no more. The Catholic philosophy taught that there were domestic enemies which all Christians were to resist and to contend against unceasingly. In breasts to which the ancient discipline is a stranger, these are unknown. "I am not surprised," says Bossuet, "if living as these men live they do not feel the eternal war of concupiscence. When you swim with the stream of a river, nothing is more gentle, but when you turn against it you will discover the rapidity of its motion. So it is with those who never try to rise above nature, or to begin the interior life. They feel not the resistance of concupiscence ; they are borne along with it, they proceed at an equal pace, and therefore its impetuosity is imperceptible to them." You have the same remark conveyed in the old verses of Glaber Rodolphus :

*"Hoc habet infelix peccandi consuetudo,  
Quod plus quis peccat, minus hic peccare paveat,  
Quique minus peccat, magis hic peccare timescat."*

Witness the experience of a St. Paul, whose affections are with Jesus Christ. Who would have supposed in a soul raised to the intelligence of the secret words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, that the war of the inclinations of sense should be still in action ? But the apostle himself speaks of it. He descends from the chaste and lofty visions of the third heaven to show himself in the arena of carnal combatants !

How came the apostles, who had left every thing, to exclaim, who then can be saved ? "Because," replies Clemens Alexandrinus, "they discerned the depth of the obscure parabolic words, and they were discouraged at the thought of the passions which they had not thoroughly given up, for salvation is of the pure and unimpassioned soul."\* "If any one contentious should ask, then," he continues, "how is it possible for the weak flesh to resist these powers, let him know that trusting in our omnipotent conqueror the Lord, we wage war against the princes of darkness and death."† The spiritual combat and the personification of the evil principle, form the grand features in the psychological history of the middle ages. The belief had its origin in the sacred Scriptures, and in the personal experience and observation of thoughtful and profound minds. The grotesque forms attached to the idea of the dæmon, may perhaps, as Michelet suggests, be traced to the lingering traditions of the conquered religions of the Fins and Scandinavians, though the bestial character comprised in it as exhibited in the visions of Dante, conformable to the general opinion of the middle ages, cannot admit of that explanation, for it has, beyond all doubt, its foundation in the secret realities of nature.

The spiritual victory over the material and immaterial evil in the minds of

\* Lib. Quis Divēs Salvetur, I

† Stromat. Lib. IV. c. 7.



Catholics, was the highest glory that could be attained by man. The state of grace was a paradise in which was beheld the river of living water, resplendent as crystal, proceeding from the seat of God and of the Lamb; while on the other hand, that of mortal sin was the gloomy region filled with demoniac forms and torments multitudinous. In the poem of the Martyrs, where Eudoxe and Velleda yield to the dæmon, "hell gives the signal of this fatal marriage: the spirits of darkness howl in the abyss—the chaste spouses of the patriarchs turn away their faces, and the protecting angel, veiling himself with his wings, mounts again to heaven." The modern philosophy has pronounced all this to be characteristic of a false and fanciful system of morality. The dæmon disappears from all action of human life, or instead of the dark cherub, the subtle and bestial fiend, he is represented as in Goethe, interesting and sentimental; or as in Milton, he excites pity and admiration, being synonymous with religion conquered, or as in Klopstock, he is shown repentant and the most interesting personage of the poem. As the principle of individuality in the will opposed to the designs of the Creator, he is wholly excluded, as also the whole belief in the inherent evil which is of concupiscence. Rationalism, in which so many religious systems began and terminated, understands the mysteries of life in a different sense: it makes the path smooth by pronouncing the contest to be vain, and victory impossible, and so converts man from being a brother in arms of the angels, to become a sensual and unresisting, and unhallowed creature of the earth. No, among men interiorly philosophic, there can be no question here. The history of the pseudo-reform in regard to its influence on morals or metaphysics, on political science, or on domestic action, may be comprised in two lines. "*Homo cum in honore esset non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis.*"\*

Here, in regard to those who have resisted this revolution, a painful and an alarming reflection suggests itself. In Catholic states however disorganized, one may live amidst men of holy simplicity, and as it were, of the old Homeric type transfigured on the mount, resembling those of whom one reads in ancient hallowed books, men of whom nearly every action and word might furnish fresh matter for some new sweet inspiring page, enough to win all hearts to a love of innocence and truth. One may imagine that one's lot has been cast in the happiest and even most romantic age of the world, in the same manner as when one visits the beautiful countries of the south, one can suppose one's self placed in some of those delicious landscapes which the pencil of Claude Lorraine has made so familiar to the fancy; whereas, if one pass into countries where the influence of faith and of all the old historic and domestic associations connected with it is limited to a very few, every thing changes, as when you turn your eyes from one of these paintings to let them wander over a vulgar and ignoble scene, and feel the heart sink on being drawn back to reality. Now it is difficult to follow the

\* Ps. xlviii.

Catholic type of moral beauty in a country where it has been supplanted by another; for besides that in such lands there is sure to be far greater external temptation, the force of that false opinion which prevails, must, like those calumnies of men from which the Psalmist prayed to be delivered, prevent many in their course, and lead many from the narrow but tranquil way. You inhale the spirit of the multitude around you. It encompasses you as an atmosphere, and enters into your very soul. Cicero, speaking of the obstacles opposed to the virtue of Roman commanders in the distant provinces of Asia, remarks, "that it is difficult for them to think of nothing but virtue, and that those also who are more moderate, possessing shame and temperance, are nevertheless thought to be so by no one on account of the multitude of the greedy."\*

So it may be in relation to Catholic manners: where no one understands their type, where no one can recognize it or appreciate it, those few who attempt to follow it are sure to be accused of being unlike the good and fair, of being illiberal and fond of singularity, the force of which misrepresentation is certainly not calculated to smooth the ascent or facilitate the path which must be trod by those who hunger and thirst after living justice. But to return to what concerns the present argument. Another remark suggested by viewing the two disciples in contrast, must be that even independent of what is required by the supernatural principles of the Catholic morality, the language of the moderns is more soft and delicate than the force and gravity of virtue would sanction. Who could doubt from which of the two camps had come that Geoffroy Ville Hardouin, the historian, offering the reality of that chivalry of which we have so many ideal portraits—a warrior impelled only by a sense of the most sacred duty, a wise counsellor, full of prudence, faith, and justice, and as unbending as the iron armor which cased his limbs? or what difficulty in determining to what senate those brave patricians belonged who are described by the historians of Venice? Whereas, on the other hand, how prepared is every one to hear the objections of the heretics advanced by those characters which Shakespeare's pen describes, in whom manhood is melted into mincing phrases and gestures of fashion? how naturally do they seem to come from a man who is in all the world's new fashion planted, that hath a mint of phrases in his brain, and whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony; who, like Paris, is fair perhaps in form and comely,

“ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι βίη φρεσὶν οὐδὲ τις ἀλκή.”†

Now, if we look to the picture on the opposite side, we are not reduced to defend the justice and morality of Catholics on the ground taken by those German writers who say that there are different standards, different types as it were of virtue in different ages, and all equally good. "There is a different measure," says Voigt, "for every age, for every nation, for every individual. As all blossoms and

\* Pro lege Manilia, 22.

† II. III. 45.

plants are not the same, so may humanity bear different forms of good, and what would be hateful in us might have been virtuous in our ancestors.”\*

To such reasoning I would only reply in the words of Cicero, “This is truly a correction and emendation of the ancient philosophy which can have no admittance within the city, the forum, or the courts.”

There is no vice so simple, but assumes some mark of virtue on its outward parts. “*Quale autem beneficium est,*” says Cicero to Antony, “*quod te abstinueris nefario scelere?*”† The moderns seem to think that the overt act is required to constitute a transgression of the law of God, and they would hold Cicero’s language where he speaks of the size and gladiatorial strength of Antony having added to the shame of his drunkenness, as proving that he might have drank so much without having been drunk.‡ The heroic, just, and devout men of the middle ages were not like the Camilluses and Themistocles of heathen, and the Bacons and Sidneys of modern times, leaving an imperishable fame as the first men of their age and the ornaments of their country, though convicted of such offences that their warmest eulogizers can only say of them what Niebuhr observes of Camillus: “In such a man the nation ought to have shown indulgence even to deplorable faults.”§ Tacitus speaking of Agricola says, “that it would be an insult to the virtues of such a man to make mention of his integrity and abstinence,” but no observant or judicious reader would quarrel with a writer of modern biography for having condescended to enter upon such details respecting the men whom he undertook to describe. Indeed, the followers of the reformed discipline spoke of their heroes as the ancients did of Cato, of whom Cæsar said, that when discovered drunk, those who beheld him seemed rather detected by Cato than Cato was by them; which makes Pliny observe in the style of Burnet, “*Potuitne plus auctoritatis tribui Catoni quam si ebrius quoque tam venerabilis erat?*”|| In general their language respecting their Franc von Sickingens, was like that of Cassius, “in such a time as this it is not meet that every nice offence should bear its comment.” Accordingly, Elizabeth, that daughter of blood, who made such slaughter of the saints, and such a jest of humanity, murdering her own guest, was saluted as an immaculate heroine, and enshrined in the hearts of all who followed the new banners, which made honorable all who followed them.

Gustavus Adolphus, who pillaged and desecrated all the churches of Germany, and ravaged ten great provinces in honor of Luther, is a name never uttered in countries where the modern discipline is established, without exultation and defiance. Who more dear and venerable in the estimation of his party than the famous admiral Coligny, who was strongly suspected of having armed the hand of Poltrot to assassinate that noble hero the duke of Guise, and who admitted that for five or six months he had heard such a plan, and that “he had strongly contested the point with them?” who confessed that Poltrot had said to him,

\* Geschichte Preussens, V. 394. † Philip. II. ‡ Ibid. II. § Hist. of Rome, II. 501.  
|| Epist. Lib. III. 12.



how easy it would be to kill the duke, but that sooth he had never "insisted upon his doing so:" who admitted that he had given Poltrot a horse; that when Poltrot had disclosed his idea he had replied nothing "to say whether it was well or ill done," and who declares in a letter to the queen that the death of the duke was the greatest good that could happen to the kingdom, to the church of God, and personally to the king, and to all the house of Coligny."\* The moderns again seem to regard indulgence in any one sin as a warrant of greater virtue in other respects, as passionate persons are said to be generous. But the Catholic moral writers hold a different doctrine, and sooth, "What boots it at one gate to make defence, and at another to let in the foe effeminately vanquished?" Even the Gentile sage showed that every evil was to be fled from by virtue and not by the contrary evil, "as some think," he says, "who correct bashfulness by insolence, rusticity by profaneness, cowardice and effeminacy by a tone of boldness and audacity, and superstition by atheism."†

The just men of Catholic times, even when described by writers of the modern school, are not represented as persons in whom deplorable faults must be forgiven in consideration of their general merits, and as being venerable even when detected in their sins. Those ancient spirits would marvel at seeing such virtue crowned even on earth. An historian knows well that if there hath been men that showed in faithful mirror the celestial justice, these without veil reflected it. Behold that Hermaan von Salza, master of the Teutonic order, of whom we have so often spoken, and hear the testimony borne to his character by Voigt, the historian of Prussia "Admirable he was in peace and war, attached to freedom, to law, and order, wise in all his counsels, pure from passion, selfishness, and love of dominion, superior to all the suggestions of pride, removed from error of every kind, detached from the world in heart as well as in vow! Humility and obedience marked every action of his life; he was always ready to devote himself for the sake of the poor, the sick, and the unprotected. As a knight and master he was of surpassing virtue, intent always upon what tended to promote the propagation of the faith, the honor of the church and the good of mankind. In his relations with the emperor and the pope he was equally tried and found eminent as one of the noblest and most just of men, eminent in the magnanimity of his soul, in the purity of his life, in the humility of his manners, in the warmth of his devotion. Not one word of censure can history pronounce against him, whether as a knight, a statesman, a Christian, or a man. So he was loved by his contemporaries, being the admiration of high and low, the ornament of his order, and the object of praise to all succeeding ages."‡ By the degree of astonishment which we should experience were we to find, after reading this, that his countrymen had to show indulgence to some deplorable faults in his character, or to

\* St. Victor, *Tableau de Paris*, Tom. III. 113.

† Plutarch.

‡ Voigt *Geschichte Preussens*, II. 365.

throw a veil over the actions of his private life, we can estimate the distance between a just man of the Catholic type, and a hero of the school which has been opposed to it as teaching a sounder and more effective morality.

In sacred dyptichs at least posterity will not discover the names of many of these latter transmitted with honor. The impression upon the mind of one familiar with antiquity, with respect to the character of the majority of men, in the times which succeeded to the ages of faith, is not assuredly that they were of a different religion, or of a more spiritual philosophy from that of the Gentiles, or that they understood morality better than the Catholics of the middle ages, but that they had thrown off all religion, and all moral restraints, excepting such as were imposed by civil laws, by the motives of personal interest, and of temporary expediency.

A classical student, who turns his view from the pages which contain the old histories of the heathen world, and its moral views to the manners of the men who move around him, will be startled by no prodigious contrast, by no novelty. He sees evidence, indeed, that they have forsaken the temples of the gods, but where does he find indication that they have fled to the cross? The persons who surround him are his old acquaintances, described in Euripides and Sallust, in Athenæus perhaps, and Suetonius. "They can fancy themselves," as Heinsius observed, "living in Greece in ancient times, fighting with Homer, though even that may be questioned, rusticating with Hesiod, loving with Anacreon, weeping with Euripides, and with Pindar rising to a poetic heaven."\* In the Gentile authors one is often struck with sudden amazement at the breaking forth of expressions which indicate how immeasurable is the distance between the sentiments of human morality and those of the Christian law. The Ion of Euripides presents many examples of this kind, as in the lines

——— ὅταν δὲ πολεμίους δρᾶσαι κακῶς  
θέλῃ τις, οὐδεὶς ἐμποδὼν καίται νόμος.†

But what is most remarkable, is the conduct of Ion; for after being prepared to consider him almost as one of our Christian acolythes, how very startling is the manner in which he expresses himself, on discovering the plot against his life. This gentle and holy youth is now full of revenge, and blasphemous imprecations against the very gods whom he had before adored. With rapture he cries out to Creusa:

ἀλλ' οὐτε βωμὸς, οὐτ' Ἀπόλλωνος δόμος,  
σώσσεις.‡

Then he condemns heaven, and pretends to be wiser and juster.

φεῦ!  
δεινὸν γε, θνητοῖς τοὺς νόμους ὥς οὐ καλῶς  
ἔθηκεν ὁ θεός, οὐδ' ἀπὸ γνώμης σοφῆς.

\* Heinsius Orat. XIX.

† 1060.

‡ 1288.

*Τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἀδίκους βωμὸν οὐχ ἔχειν ἐχρήν,  
ἀλλ' ἐξελαύνειν.\**

And when the priestess remonstrates with him, he justifies his own projects of having complete satisfaction ; demanding

*Οὐ χρή με τοὺς κτείνοντάς ἀνταπολλύαι ;†*

The minister of heaven can give him no higher law. She speaks of purity ; and he replies, every one is pure who kills his enemy : concluding with an insolent declaration, that he has been deceived by the god, that he disdains his revelations ; and adds, that if on discovering his real mother, she should prove to be some slave, it would be much better for him never to have heard of her. And this is the sacerdotal youth who appeared at first all innocence, and gentleness, and sanctity ! Assuredly, most striking are such passages, and most convincing is the evidence which they furnish, as to the fact of there being on earth a new created man. But of this evidence the Gentile authors are not the only source, for in the writings of the moderns we are liable to meet with similar interruptions to the current of a discourse which had professed to spring from the supernatural fountain of divine faith. Read that letter from Sir Philip Sidney to Molineux, his father's secretary, declaring that he suspects him of having communicated to other persons the letters which he had intended for his father's ear alone, and concluding with these words : "I assure you before God, that if ever I know you do so much as read any letter I write to my father without his commandment or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak it in earnest ; in the mean time, farewell." The author to whom we are indebted for a beautiful edition of Sir Philip Sidney's works, acknowledges that this epistle is sadly deficient in point of discretion and temper ; "but," he adds, "as showing the intensity of his filial regard, it must lead to our increased love and respect for the amiable qualities of his heart." That Sir Philip Sidney possessed the highest virtue of a natural order, and that his character corresponded with the fairest ideal of the discipline to which he was attached, may be very true, but assuredly, to one familiar with the tradition of Catholic manners, there was somewhat to astonish in such a letter, coming from a man who separated himself from the ancient society, on the alleged ground of its not being according to Scripture and the Evangelic law. Now mark a contrast in regard to the duties of a particular state.

We have often read of the retreats for prayer and spiritual meditations, practised at regular intervals by Catholic bishops, who had been obliged to take a part in civil affairs for the interest of kings and people ; but what is the provision made by that illustrious historian, and model of the modern discipline, the bishop Burnet, when placed in similar circumstances ? "Upon this," he says, "I went into a closer retirement, and to keep my mind from running after news and affairs, I set

\* 1 325.

† 1342.



myself to the study of philosophy and algebra ;" expedient worthy, no doubt, of an Aristotle or an Archimedes, but rather singular when selected by one who professed to be a successor of the Apostles, and a restorer of Scripture, and a sound morality to the Church. It is painful to be obliged to include the glorious name of Milton in the list of those whose works can supply contrasts of this extraordinary and afflicting nature? How does he speak, albeit with the name of God, and the church, and reformation, ever on his tongue? Read his defences of the people of England. With what fury and virulence does he attack his opponents: with what inconceivable frivolity does he describe the beauty of his person, setting forth among his other bodily accomplishments, his skill and practice in handling his sword. "Armed," saith he, "with this weapon, as I commonly was, I thought myself a match for any man, though far my superior in strength, and secure from any insult which one man could offer to another. At this day I have the same spirit; my eyes only are not the same."\* Let nature have her due praise, as she hath always her reward. All this may be amiable and admirable; but does it indicate a better understanding of morals in the Christian sense, for that is the present question, or is it consistent with the character of religious reformers, for that again is a question that forcibly suggests itself? Is it not calculated to awaken many suspicions, and to justify the inference, that the real cause of opposition to the Catholic church was something very different from a true progress in moral philosophy, and a light infused by the author of the Holy Scriptures? But without going back to past times, is it not evident that the moral views of the very men who affirm that morality is now better understood than in the middle ages, are obnoxious to the charge of inconsistency? A Catholic, on reading the poem of *Marmion*, must be startled when he hears Constance de Beverley, for whom preceding verses has awakened a lively interest, suddenly exclaiming:

"But did my fate and wish agree  
Ne'er had been read, in story old,  
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,  
That loved or was avenged like me."†

Another of these sudden inconsistent transitions occurs in the *Lady of the Lake*, where the death words of Blanche to Fitz-James are given, invoking him by his knighthood's honored sign, and for his life's sake, which she had preserved, to avenge her. The hour of death has restored her reason; you expect to hear the last sighs and wishes of a Christian soul. And what are the words—

"Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,  
And wreak poor Blanche of Devon's wrong!"

The heroic spirit which we have noticed as characteristic of the Catholic justice, might again be viewed here in opposition to the kind of shop-counter morality,

\* Second Defence of the People of England.

† *Marmion*, II.

which is so predominant in the modern literature, philosophy, and manners. This kind undoubtedly was not so well understood in the middle ages, by those at least with whom history is concerned; for, in fact, men were often really deficient in respect to it, so as even to feel a foolish pride in saying with Armado, "I am ill at reckoning; it fitteth the spirit of a tapster." Here a grand reform was made by the disciples of the new discipline, whose perfect understanding, within this sphere may be collected from a few examples. Paulus, a professor of the new theology, objects to the miracle of our Lord respecting the tribute money, by observing, that "at Capernaum where he had friends a miracle for about a dollar would certainly have been superfluous." When Luther would express his horror of the sentiments of Erasmus, he can find no stronger terms to indicate it than by saying, that he would not for 10,000 florins be in his place. Burnet, too, in enumerating the excellent virtues of one renowned hero of his party, mentions that he would never attempt to pass off bad money, which he knew to be such.

All the enlightened men, who follow these leaders, would resent as an injury the intimation that they had no regard for very elevated sentiments; but, the fact is, that when left to themselves, and observed off their guard, in the assembly of their peers, in their political writings as well as in the common occasions of life, they never, by any hazard, allude to the profession or exercise of heroic virtue, unless in the way of ridicule or of objection. They declare that it is beyond all power of human credulity to believe, that public men would support or oppose a state measure unless they received an equivalent for their doing so. They proclaim, that the only safeguard for the justice of men is publicity, and that no one can be trusted whose actions are not constantly submitted to the scrutiny of the world. Expediency is their avowed and exclusive motive, even when they do an eminent act of justice; and what can be expected from them when they are required to perform an act of sacrifice? They ascribe no value to any thing but what is attached to the material and temporal order. As De Haller says of the revolutionary sophists, who are opposed to all authority, spiritual and temporal, extending their false ideas to every thing, they distort and paralyze the best measures; they have always objections to advance against what is good, and excuses ready for evil. To their eyes the moment for the first is never come; but there is always urgent necessity for the latter. In short, however unwilling one may be to arrive at a conclusion which seems like accusing a set of men in mass, there is no other inference possible, after an attentive observation of what has occurred in later times, but that nothing carries with it, in the estimation of those who are true disciples of the modern discipline, the character of solidity, of practical, sober, enlightened, and dispassionate wisdom, excepting what is in its last terms, a sordid and despicable life, without genius, and without virtue.

The very confessions, too, of the men who accomplished and favored the revolution of the sixteenth century, and who stood high in the estimation of its admirers, are worthy of being remarked.

The bitter hate which pervaded the mind of Calvin, is ascribed by some to the sufferings of his youth, when he lived as preceptor in a proud family, which made him feel his inferiority. "After all my efforts," he says, "I cannot tame my own ferocity." Sir Philip Sidney, indeed, takes an opportunity most pointedly to deny the charge brought against himself, that he was wholly possessed by egotism and bubbling pride; but he pleads guilty of a headlong ambition, that made him 'oft his best friends overpass.'\*\* "I perceive my soul," says Fuller, "deeply guilty of envy. By my good will, I would have none prophesy but mine own Moses. I had rather the Lord's work were undone, than done better by another than by myself."† These men, who accused the Catholic society of the middle ages of having been left in ignorance of the Bible, gave no proof of having rendered their own manners, or those of the disciples who followed them, conformable to its spirit. The names and phrases of the Old Testament were indeed ever on their tongue; but did they learn from it to evince the meekness of Moses, the simplicity of Joseph, the gentleness of David, the fervor of Elias, the abstinence of Daniel, the chastity of Samuel? It might be doubted, whether amidst the general advance, as they supposed, of knowledge, when even the Bible, as Novalis suggests, was to be considered as progressive, they had learned to understand so much as to know with what virtues these names of holy writ ought to be associated; though that knowledge would have been more satisfactory proof of morality being well understood, than the writing up "Bethel" and "Zion" over their halls of assembly, and calling their children Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago. They adopted a different division of the decalogue, although they might have known that St. Clemens of Alexandria, so profoundly versed in ancient erudition, when philosophizing upon the two tables, and showing their mystic principle, divides them as did the Catholic church, in their days;‡ but the question was still urgent, were they the first to enable men to fulfil it in spirit and in justice? Truly it is only one who has followed the history of the religious innovators, and marked their manners from their first appearance as a society, that can understand the Apostle, who, after describing men "lovers of themselves, greedy, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, unchaste, cruel, without benignity, betrayers, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," adds—"habentes speciem quidem pietatis."§ As for those more avowedly in alliance with the world, their history is not more inviting.

"The monster of modern sophistry," says the poet Gilbert, "has not a ferocious air, and the name of virtue is always on its tongue; but what age was ever more fertile in vice, more sterile in noble deeds, than this which is termed the age of reason, when men are taught by moral authors, that for the philosopher there is no God?"|| No. These pretensions are vain, and the men who produce them

\* The life of S. P. Sidney.  
§ 2 ad Tim. iii.

† Thoughts, XII.  
|| Gilbert le XVIII. Siècle.

‡ Stromat. Lib. VI. c. 16.



have given no proof of having reformed or perfected either the philosophy or the practice of morals. The ancient Christian civilization was indeed disturbed by the common vices of our nature, and embittered by the usual miseries that wait on the present probationary state of man ; but, on the other hand, it is impossible to survey it without discovering the existence of certain high peculiar virtues in the morality which formed it, of the most admirable adaptation to all our wants, and in strictest conformity to our noblest and purest conceptions of perfection—virtues such as had never been seen, or to the same degree developed under any other form of human society, and which constitute evidently a link in the chain of universal order. Nay, traverse in every direction, if you will, the vast empires that have lost unity—no where will you ever find these peculiar and inalienable titles, which raise the Catholic morality above all that the human intelligence of itself had ever taught, or the human unassisted nature ever practised ; graces independent of individuality of temper or genius, of national character, or local influence, which defy all attempts to praise them worthily, or even to define them with precision, separated by a slender, hardly traceable, but wholly impassable line, from all human virtue ;—graces, than which nothing is found sweeter, nothing stronger, like the dew of heaven, while descending in separate drops, following a universal and invariable law, so as to be perfectly the same in each, dispensing equal benediction over the whole face of nature ;—graces, which the eyes of humanity are never quite prepared to witness, which, after having been practised nearly two thousand years, seem still in each contemporary act a divine novelty,—before which, astonished sufferers, and those who dread impending wrath, are often constrained, as we have seen in the late afflictions, to renounce all their fondest prejudices, and to fall upon their knees in a rapture of grateful admiration ;—gifts that almost render the person of man angelic, godlike, which the just of the middle ages all received, and which, in the Catholic church, will be found for ever.

## CHAPTER X.



FROM a view of historical facts and characters during the middle ages, an attentive observer will have perceived that there were still many peculiar features of great importance in the system of Catholic morals, besides those which we have already examined. These it must be our object in the remaining pages of the sixth book to investigate and explain. The difficulties which encompass persons without the sphere of unity in their first deliberations respecting the importance of returning to it, cannot be a subject of surprise when we bear in mind that the question then before them is one which must affect them in the most susceptible and intimate part, since it is one not alone of speculation and abstract philosophy, but much more of practical life and manners—a serious deliberation truly, to use the words of Plato, *οὐ γὰρ περὶ τοῦ ἐπιτυχόντος ὁ λόγος, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ ὄντινα τρόπον χρὴ ζῆν*.<sup>\*</sup> In fact, where men had not been formed to the manners of the Catholic type, there was something far more difficult to overcome than any opinion before they could become living members of the universal Christian society. It was not merely principles and doctrines in that case that were to be changed. The men were to be changed : their souls, by means of new acts, and voluntary thoughts were to be put in a new psychological condition ; things were to be brought out by the associating principle in new intellectual combinations. St. Ambrose remarks the connection between belief and manners, saying, “ubi cœperit quis luxuriari, incipit deviare a fide vera.”<sup>†</sup> Before a comparison had been instituted between the moral philosophy of the ages of faith and that of latter times, it would have been well for many writers if they had studied the former in other sources besides the writings of the licentious satirists, and the annals of Scotch and English wars. If the work of Richard of St. Victor, *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni*, or his book *de statu interioris hominis*, or Abelard’s treatise on morals, “know thyself ;” had been examined, or if men had only read the twelve rules of John Picus of Mirandula, entitled *Regulæ Dirigentes*, or the letter which St. Francis addressed to all the Christians, religious, clergy, laics, men and women, who dwell in the universal world, greeting them with peace from heaven and charity in the Lord,<sup>‡</sup> I am willing to believe that we

\* Plato de Repub. Lib. 1.

† Epist. Lib. VI. 36.

‡ Wadding Ann. Minor. an 1213.

should never have been told by respectable writers that morality was now better understood.

“To form a good system of ethics it is required, first that it be precise, not to give place to the illusions of self-love; secondly, certain, to bind firmly the liberty of man, who would not be subject to an uncertain law; thirdly, predominant in the ideas of man, in order to overcome his passions; fourthly, efficacious, administering an internal force to the assistance of reason, to sustain man in the practice of his duty.” “All these qualities,” concludes Spedalieri, “belong to the Catholic religion, and to no other.”\*

The consequence of the modern principle of private judgment, which reduced the Christian religion to the rank of human religion, and from being a deposit of faith to be the sport of men’s fancies, was that there arose as many opinions concerning it as there were heads, *nec circa credenda tantum, sed circa agenda quoque*; for it is a fact of history and of experience, that there were not wanting persons who sought to justify from the Holy Scriptures, theft, adultery, and murder. It will be in vain to talk of appealing to extreme instances, and of drawing undue inferences from them when we have the histories of Germany, Switzerland and Scotland, furnishing a concurrent testimony to the truth of this assertion. A custom prevailed in the canton of Berne, associated with the first communion, which it is impossible to describe in these pages, and which, as the count of Stolberg before his conversion remarked, could only be elsewhere sought for among the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands.† Endeavoring, therefore, that at least the rule of manners might be preserved from wreck, other men, laying aside the interpretation of the sacred books, applied themselves to the study of what was termed the law of nature, founded on the authority of human reason; supposing that they who differed concerning revelation might be made to agree upon moral doctrines. Hence a custom prevailed of teaching a moral discipline without any reference to religion, and of submitting all duties to the tribunal of human reason: which gave birth to innumerable treatises on moral philosophy and the law of nature, in which Christian motives were laid aside, and the office of instruction was ascribed to philosophy, as in the heathen books.‡ Accordingly so similar was the result, that the words of Cicero might be taken into any narrative of recent times, and pass for a true delineation of them. “Other precepts have now succeeded to these,” says the philosopher, “therefore some hold, that wise men should do all things for the sake of pleasure; for even from this turpitude of speech, learned men have not fled. Others think that dignity is to be joined with pleasure, that things greatly at variance with each other may be conjoined by the faculty of language. They who approve of that one direct course to praise with labor, are now left almost alone in the schools. *Prope jam soli in scholis sunt re-*

\* Spedalieri de diritti dell’ uomo. IV.

† Reise in der Schweiz, 20 B.

‡ Ventura de Methodo Philosophandi, cap. 3. art 5.



licti. This way, therefore, is now left desert and uncultivated, and already it is grown over with leaves and boughs.”\*

A wondrous thing indeed it was, and most worthy of the attention of men truly wise, that whilst all people every where who had been trained according to the traditions and discipline of the Catholic church, possessed sure principles of justice and virtue, so that the rudest minds, although unable to give accurate definitions, nevertheless knew perfectly what was good, what was evil, what was agreeable to nature, what repugnant; in a word, all duties and all principles, and were able to exercise a right judgment respecting all the offices of life, the men who wished to be called wise, and the reformers of the church and of philosophy, were still disputing in schools respecting good and evil, and the foundations of a happy life, the origin of laws, and duties, the principles of government and of society, and with such violence and diversity of sentiment, that after so many ages of disputation they were unable to agree in any definition; there being some found even to palliate if not to approve of sins that Gentiles in their parables condemn to their abyss and horrid pains; so that there was more judgment among the ignorant and rustic multitude, among boys and women than among bearded philosophers; more in the workshops of artizans than in the lyceums of learned men; and no kind, no condition or sex were so wanting in moral truth as those philosophic inquirers, whose only employment was the investigation of truth; the words of Cicero being still applicable to philosophers, “quanto melius hæc vulgus imperitorum.” The moderns seem to think, that in the judgment of morals as of poetry,† there is nothing which gives pleasure or indignation, but what is mutable; nothing in the principles of human society, or in the rule of human duties, fixed and eternal. The arrival of each new sophist is therefore hailed as the harbinger of some fresh light, which is to dispel the clouds and uncertainty in which their moral philosophy may be still involved. Let the system of this stranger be ever so extravagant and absurd, still if it only seem to be new, and above all if it hath been condemned by the Holy See, there are instantly found ingenious and eloquent men to advocate it, and to encourage the author.

“Undique visendi studio Trojana juvenus  
Circumfusa ruit, certantque illudere capto.”

In general on these occasions they are divided between the advice of the rash Thymoetes and the prudent Capys,

“Scinditur incertum studia contraria vulgus.”

Is the novelty to be admitted or not? becomes the question with a Christian people, who were to have been established and rooted in the faith once transmitted, and persevering unto the end in the doctrine of the apostles. The men of Catholic ages knew that there is an eternal law, as St. Thomas remarked, not

\* Pro. M. Cœlio, 17.

† Hor. Epist. II. 1.

from there having been from eternity those who might be subject to it, since God alone is from eternity, but because things which exist not in themselves exist in God, inasmuch as they are foreknown and pre-ordained by him.\* The Catholic had his eyes always fixed upon what is arranged according to perfect and eternal order, and therefore it was he who attained to that condition described by Plato, for in consequence of having such an object he neither committed nor suffered injustice, since when he suffered, he only suffered what providence permitted, and moved always conformably to reason and to order.† St. Augustin speaks in no measured terms of an opinion which would now be designated as liberal, and says, that “some being moved by the variety of innumerable customs, sleeping men as it were, who have never risen from the sleep of folly, nor awakened to the light of wisdom, think that there is no justice in itself, but that the custom of each country constitutes justice, which must therefore vary.” “They do not perceive,” he adds, “that the rule of not doing to others what you do not wish they should do to you, can never vary, which sentence when referred to the love of God is the destruction of all crimes.”‡

During the middle ages, the Catholic rule of manners emanating to the people from the church, obviated the danger of uncertainty or variation in the fulfilment of human duties. “*Ecclesia Dei ea quæ sunt contra fidem vel bonam vitam non approbat, nec tacet.*” This is what St. Augustin says. “The church,” as Melchior Canus observed, “could not err in delivering precepts of manners, which are necessary to salvation, and common to the whole church.” Indeed the infallibility of her decisions in matters of faith, necessarily involved certainty in respect to the rule of manners; for from the former men know accurately where to place the chief good and the chief evil, and as Cicero says, “where this is once found, the way of life is found;” *inventæ vitæ via est conformatioque omnium officiorum.*§ If the rule of faith be left depending on the private judgment of individuals, the way of manners independent of Catholic traditions, and the influence of the Catholic church, will become like the way of darkness described by Æschylus:

— δυσοδοπαίπαλα  
δερκομένοισι καὶ δυσομύτοις δμῶς.¶

Moreover men were not reduced to the necessity of drawing the practical inference for themselves from the principles of faith, however clear and easy might be the deduction. The people were to be expressly instructed, as the decrees of Ives de Chartres say, in all their essential duties to God, their neighbor, and themselves.¶ They were taught what St. Bernard shows in the third book of his considerations, that in all their actions they were to consider three things, first, what was lawful; secondly, what was decorous; and, thirdly, what was expedient to do. They

\* 1, 2, 9, 91, Art. I.

† Plato de Repub. Lib. VI.

‡ De Doct. Lib. III. cap. 14.

§ De Finibus, Lib. V.

¶ Eumenid. 388

¶ Decret. Pars VI. c. 154.

were taught that the Christian life might be described, as Rosmene says, in four words,—to do, to suffer, to be silent, and to pray,—to do the duties of one's state; to suffer willingly the internal and external tribulations that God might send; to be silent on the defects of others; and to pray to God incessantly in labor, in temptation, in the beginning and end of all works. Each man's own heart was to tell him whether he heard the words of God, which were the criterion to determine under what banner he was enrolled: and in order to ascertain that point, as St. Gregory saith, he had only to ask himself did he desire the celestial country; did he refrain from fleshly lusts; did he decline the glory of the world; did he abstain from coveting what belonged to others, and did he give to others what was his own?"\*

Thus the destination of men was perfectly clear to them, so long as they only asked the question what have they to do? though when they wished to know more than that, whether to unriddle the endless destiny in the life of one single man, in the history of humanity, or in the whole course of nature, they were presented with mysteries which will, during the present life, for ever remain hidden to the human intelligence. No Catholic, where points of fact were set at rest, could ever be ignorant of what ought to be done in any of the great questions, which agitate nations any more than in the circumstances affecting his own private and domestic state. Every member of holy church was, as St. Anselm says, like a square stone, which stands equally well on any one of its six sides; for whether in prosperity or in adversity, in freedom or in subjection, in secret or in public, he stood firmly and persisted in his purpose.† What Hubert remarks of the Spaniards, and of all people of the South, that religion, custom, power, in short, the positive, determines many questions, the solution of which belongs generally to the province of romance writers,‡ was strictly true of the Catholic society in every country during the middle ages. Taste, elegance, politeness, sentiment, were all included in the fulfilment of duty.

In later times, abstractions have been substituted for things. Even men who have an exact knowledge of what is right and wrong, of what is allowed, and of what is forbidden, seem unable to recognise the actual circumstances under which they are called upon to put in practice what they have so often theoretically learned, so that in reality their religion is wholly separated from life; it is an embroidered suit, which is hung up in secret closets and never worn, and thus they pass their days amidst repeated occasions of obeying the law of God and of imitating Christ, without having the least idea that an occasion has ever been presented to them of doing so.

Now in the middle ages, religion acted immediately and practically upon life; it was an every day suit. In the fortune-teller, men beheld the person from

\* Hom. XVIII. in Evan.

† S. Anselmi de Similitudinibus, cap. 173.

‡ Skizzen aus Spanien, XI.



whose door they were to turn away in shuddering, in the profane assembly the moment when they were not to be ashamed of Christ, in the festival the day set apart from servile work, in the poor beggar the person of their Lord to whom the cup was due, in the cross by the way side, a type of the mystery which saved the world, in the priest the minister of Christ. Hence the harmony between the external order and the piety of the faithful was preserved. It is not that external circumstances are at present wanting, but that the art of recognizing them is lost, which is also, one may remark by the way, the art of rendering life poetical; for it is this reducing of religion to abstractions which makes life so monotonous and unpicturesque, so prosaic and material. Men now talk of realities as opposed to the fancies of youth and the tenderness of an unenlightened devotion, without knowing what realities in fact are, though nothing can be easier than to discover this. The Catholic life was a life of poesy and of ideal beauty, for reality is original sin. What is the ideal? In men, the ideal must be either absurd, or else the type which was in God's mind before original sin. Therefore the Catholic life, while in the highest degree poetic, was in the strictest sense a life of duty. Every thing was precise and definite in its course. Do you suppose that a savage and reckless path, like that of so many disciples of a modern poet, is more congenial to the muse? You are in error. Even for the attainment of what most enchants the heart of unsophisticated youth, the Catholic course was more inviting than a wild dedication of itself to unpathed waters, undreamed shores, most certain to miseries enough. But to return, it was one of the greatest characteristics of the Catholic morality, and one of the great advantages of its authority, that it prevented all the sophisms of the passions with a precept or a declaration. Thus, as Manzoni remarks, when it was disputed whether men of a different color from Europeans ought to be considered as men, the church, pouring on their foreheads the regenerative water, imposed silence for ever upon that discussion.\*

Sismondi says that the church, by forbidding men to speak evil of each other, has prevented them from expressing the just judgment upon virtue and vice, and has put truth to silence. The reply of Manzoni deserves great attention. "Every time," he says, "that a person imagines he has found in the Catholic religion an obstacle to some sentiment, action, or institution, just and useful, generous and tending to social improvement, on examining it well, he will find either that the obstacle does not exist, and that its appearance arose solely from not having sufficiently observed religion, or else that this thing has not the character and the end which it seems to have at the first view. Besides the common illusion which springs from the weakness of our understanding, there is a constant temptation of hypocrisy, from which even the purest minds and most desirous of good are not exempt, of an hypocrisy which associates the idea of a greater good, the idea of a generous inclination with the desires of the predominant passion. If

\* Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica, 103.

under such influence we condemn the rule of morality, we run the risk of serving some reprobate sentiment, which we do not confess even to ourselves.\* On the other hand, from this positive and authoritative nature of the law of manners, it followed that the dangers which attend a thirst for justice were obviated.

It is a common reflection of Catholic moralists, that scruples only proceed from spiritual pride. This profound reflection is a proof among many, of the accuracy and depth which they have employed in the study of the human mind, and in the detection of the intricate windings of the passions. Manzoni observes that this moral malady attests the excellence of religion. The tendency to perfection is so inseparable from it, that it is manifested at length even in the troubles and misery of the man who professes it. A mind devoured by the dread of not being sufficiently just, so as to lose its tranquillity, might have appeared as a prodigy of virtue, if religion herself, so superior to the views of men, had not shown in such a mind dispositions contrary to trust, to humility, and to Christian freedom; if it had not furnished the idea of a virtue from which all disordinate movements are excluded, and which in proportion as it advances to perfection, finds itself nearer to peace and to the highest reason.†

The results of extravagance in morals were profoundly estimated by the philosophers of the middle age. "Observe," says Richard of St. Victor, "that by how much more imprudently and immoderately any one casts himself down, to so much the more insane and enormous pride does he afterwards give way. Mark in this King Nebuchadnezzar, the inconstant and indiscreet humiliation which is succeeded by more than human pride; for he who first adored Daniel, afterwards set up his own statue to be adored."‡ "What sort of charity is this," says S. Bonaventura, "by which you will at one time love your neighbor more than yourself and beyond the commandment, and at another so little that, contrary to the commandment, your love for him will be dissolved by favor or fear, disturbed by sadness, contracted by avarice, weakened by ambition, distorted by honors, cooled by envy? 'Noli nimium esse justus.' It is sufficient that you love your neighbor as yourself. 'Implere prius, et sic curato effundere.' "§

The precision of the rule of duties furnished even occasion to many striking scenes, which history does not disdain to record, and gave dignity to acts that would otherwise have seemed too trifling for notice, as when Fructuoso, bishop of Tarragona, going to martyrdom, refused a drink which was offered to him, saying that the hour of breaking the fast was not come.

Again, it should be observed, that the only justice, the only morality recognized by the Catholic discipline, was that which involved all virtues and the fulfilment of all duties, the most common and vulgar as well as the most rare and sublime. "King Edward the Fourth," says the monk of Croyland, "testi-

\* 239. † Id. 292. ‡ Richard. S. Vict. de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. 1. c. 37. § Meditat. Vitæ Christi, cap. 47.

fied the catholicity of his mind at the last ; for he made restitution to every man whom he had defrauded or injured by extortion ; and no better end could he have made than this, in which he endeavored to imitate Zacchæus, and with this intention he might have hope, for it is not said that Christ had respect to the works of Zacchæus but to his mind.”\* In like manner, Henry the Second, emperor and third king, made restitution at his death of property which he had seized in his anger, and asked pardon of all whom he had injured.†

Hear how father John de Avila replies to a grandee of Spain who was sick, and who had written to ask his advice. “If you should have gained any thing at play, I wish you would restore it, and if you have encouraged or requested others to play and they have lost, I wish you would restore to them what they lost. You should publish through all the churches of your state, that if any of your servants or officers should have done injury to any one you are anxious to repair it.”‡

Shakespeare, who draws from life in Catholic society, describes Hamlet’s uncle as wanting no instruction here.

‘But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murther !  
That cannot be ; since I am still possess’d  
Of those effects for which I did the murther,  
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.”

It is a common opinion with modern superficial writers, that the clergy praised indiscriminately all who gave riches to the church, and that by liberality to the clergy men believed themselves dispensed from observing justice in their secular relations ; and here we should remark, how totally they are deceived in entertaining it. Not even from the casual observations of those who wrote upon subjects that had not immediate connection with morals, can they find for it a shadow of ground. Hear how Romuald, archbishop of Salerno, speaks of King William of Sicily. “This king,” saith he, “greatly venerated the persons of ecclesiastics, and enriched the clergy with many gifts, and left in his testament large sums to be expended for the safety of his soul. He was a victorious king by sea and land, but hateful to his subjects ; more feared than loved ; in heaping up money very solicitous, in expending it not sufficiently liberal.”§

The Catholic discipline was very strict with regard to those duties which men who affect great intellectual elevation, and particularly those who pretend to reform philosophy, are very apt to overlook. In the laws of the Visigoths, we read that there is no asylum for debtors in a church. The church defends no debtor, but delivers him up, provided he is not to be bound or struck ; but in presence of the priest or deacon the time is to be fixed for paying the debt.|| On

\* Hist. Croylandensis in Rer. Anglic. Script. Tom. I. 564. † Chronic. Hirsaugiensis, I.

‡ John de Avila, Part II. Epist. 62.

§ Rer. Italic. Script. Tom. VII.

|| Legis Wisigothorum, Lib. IX. tit. III. 4.



the other hand, there was a heavy penalty by the civil laws against attacking the dead on account of debts, and insulting their funerals.\*

When Gonsalvus Sancius, a man of arms at first, was converted to a religious life, he deemed it not enough to clothe him in good St. Francis's girdle, but he distributed all his goods among his creditors; and finding that there was not sufficient to repair the losses which he had occasioned while conducting the armies of Peter, king of Castile, he presented himself, with a cord tied round his neck, to all whom he had injured, and implored their pardon.† René Pazzi, who had shown from the first a horror at the conspiracy of his family, in which he had refused to take part, was nevertheless involved in the ruin which followed its defeat, and barbarously executed. He had always been very bountiful in alms to the poor, and a great benefactor to the churches. On the eve of the day of the fatal enterprise, he had paid all his debts with great exactness, and had returned to the owners all the goods which had been deposited in his warehouse, or at the custom-house under his name, in order that if any misfortune overtook him, no one might receive injury through him.

Those debtor stones, which may be seen at Padua, Verona, Florence, and Sienna, before which a debtor used to be delivered from the pursuit of his creditors, on condition of his swearing, after a humiliating ceremony, that he had not five francs in his possession, indicate that in those times there was less intrepidity in crime and less severity in legislation than in subsequent ages. To these exact principles must be traced that wise and minute economy which was such a characteristic of many of the ancient kings, of which there are such striking instances in the lives of Charlemagne and other heroic Catholic princes. The Abbot Alexander says that Roger, king of Sicily, was never idle for an instant, but when not otherwise employed, he wrote or read documents relative to affairs, for of every thing there was an exact account kept in writing, and he gave nothing with inconsiderate liberality, heeding the common maxim "whoso liveth not according to number, will live to shame."‡ The lesson which Dante learned in Paradise, was taught to each man on earth in Catholic times: that if evil fruit should follow good intent and strict obedience to the law of justice, all the ill derived from his well doing will not harm him aught, though it have brought destruction on the world.§

Even the admirers of the modern opinions could not but respect this inflexible justice in the followers of the ancient faith. "Queen Mary," saith Weever, "resigned to God and holy church all those ecclesiastical revenues which had been annexed to the crown in the time of King Henry, saying, (with a Christian and princely resolution, I must confess,) to certain of her counsellors who objected that her crown imperial could not be honorably maintained and furnished with-

\* Gregorius Tholosanus *Preludia Jurisconsulti*, Lib. II.

† Wadding *Annal. Minor.* Tom VIII.

‡ *De Rebus Gest. Rogerii*, Lib. IV. c. 3. *Rer. Italic. Script.* Tom. V. § *Parad.* XX.

out the possessions as resaid, 'that she set more by the salvation of her soul than she did by ten kingdoms.' '\*

While the strict and positive principles of Catholic morality protected dependents from the injustice of superiors, they afforded no less security to the latter against the dishonesty of those whom they employed. Merchants did not find in the cupidity of their agents such obstacles that even a lucrative operation presented them the chance of ruin if they did not personally conduct it in all the details. Assuredly, there was a great commercial activity during the middle ages; but it did not involve speculations without regard to justice, bankruptcies, and all the other attendants on a general demoralization. The modern governments have begun to discern how fatal for the state is the influence of individual cupidity, and more than once the ministers of commerce have used a language in their circulars which would not have been out of place in our churches. Not a little remarkable is the manner in which the uncompromising and precise justice of the Catholic discipline appears to have influenced even the municipal laws of cities, and the minute ordinances of police respecting them, which in point of wise provision for the health and security of the inhabitants were far different from what the moderns are in the habit of supposing. The measures ordained for the city of Lyons in the time of St. Louis, and of king Charles the Fifth, the ordinances of the magistrates from the year 1261 to 1483 would do honor to the best regulated municipality of the present day.† The interests even of learning were here promoted, as may be witnessed in the strict justice which was required in the sale of books, and secured by the statutes of the university of Paris in the thirteenth century. Dante beholds the usurer in hell, and says that his was a crime that offends celestial goodness. Such was the belief of the middle ages.

Guibert, abbot of Nogent, relates a dreadful example. A notorious usurer at Laon being on his death-bed demanding interest from a poor woman who had paid him the principal, and who in vain implored its remittance, persisted, declaring that the interest must be paid. She brings it deficient only in one penny, and places the money before him; he swears that he will have that one. She again goes away, and beyond her hopes finds it, and brings it to him. Being now in his agony, he seizes the piece of money, puts it into his mouth, and swallowing it by accident, breathes out his soul, and with that viaticum migrates one can conceive whither: his body is cast out, and deservedly rejected from sacred places. So much for the corroders of the poor.§ In the council of Lyons, which condemned the heresy of those called the poor men, it was ordained that no priest should receive to confession a manifest and notorious usurer, and that no absolution could be granted to him until he had made restitution, or given sufficient security that he would do so as far as he was able. Foulques, the cele-

\* A Discourse of Funeral Monuments, 115.

† Paradin Hist. de Lyons, Liv. II. cap. 67, 68, 87, and 110. ‡ Hist. Universit Par. Tom. III.

§ Guiberti de Novigento de Vita Propria, Lib. III. cap. 18

brated preacher, particularly directed his zeal against usury, which had been introduced from Italy into France about this time, and many usurers, after hearing his sermons, restored their unlawful profits to the poor.\* When Rodolph, of Habsberg, was asked why he did not give part of the goods of the Jews to some churches, instead of distributing all among the poor, he replied, "Do you not know that these goods were acquired by usury, and therefore unjustly gained; but the church of God is holy, and can only be honored with goods that have been obtained with justice."† The hospitality and munificence of Reginaldo Scrovinio were celebrated through all Italy; but the generous use which he made of his immense riches could not tranquillize his conscience. Contrite for the usury of which he had been guilty, and for which Dante rashly places him in the Inferno, he went to Rome, and being enjoined to make restitution, was absolved by Pope Benedict, who had been his guest and friend. After his death, Henry, his son, moved by filial piety, and concern for his soul, purchased the arena, at Padua, on which had been a theatre, and on the spot erected a magnificent church, which he adorned with the paintings of Zoto.‡ Those who would learn what were the usurious iniquities of the Jews, and their abettors in Italy, many of whom were persons in authority, in the fifteenth century, should consult the sermons of Bernardine of Monte Feltro, whom they sought to poison, on account of his zeal in protecting the people from them, and the report of local historians of that time, commemorating the foundation of mounts of piety, with the pontifical bulls establishing the same, which were instituted at his suggestion in almost all the cities of Italy, a glorious monument of the order of St. Francis, in testimony of its affection for the poor.§

The church never allowed any money to be made of money, independent of compensation for danger of loss or temporal injury.|| Calvin denied that usury was a sin, whom many heretics followed, amongst others Claudius Salmasius, though with strange inconsistency they condemned the mounts of piety for receiving any remuneration, probably because they were sanctioned by the popes, though these were administered by charitable persons who received no salary. Indeed in some places at first, as at Vicenza, money was given freely, only with an admonition to be grateful, and an intimation that whatever was voluntarily given would be expended in charity to others; in consequence of which many offered a greater sum than was prescribed by Bernardine. Although the church has not given any formal decision, and it be probable that the question respecting the practice of northern nations in modern times, will be, nevertheless, determined practically in its favor, still, it is certain, that during the middle ages, the lend-

\* Bulæus, Hist. Universit. Parisiensis, Tom. II.

† Trithem. Chronic. Hirsaugiensis ad an., 1283.

‡ Bernardini Scardeonii Hist. Patavinæ, Lib. III. 13.

§ Wadd. Ann. Minorum. Vols. XIV. and XV.

|| Joan. Devoti Instit. Canonic. Lib. IV. tit. XVI.



ing of money, which was of no immediate use to themselves, formed one of the offices of humanity and charity, to which men and Christians believed themselves bound; \* and St. Thomas was of opinion that they had no right to make the person pay for the advantage he derived from the loan, because that results from the use to which he applied it, and they had no right, he thought, to make him pay for his own industry.†

But if by lending money men suffered inconvenience, or incurred danger, in that case they were at all times permitted to receive a moderate interest. The legislation respecting the rate of interest in the states, which embraced the new opinions, presented a curious example of what might result when the system of Catholic morality was abandoned, as may be witnessed by referring to the acts of the English parliament in the reign of Elizabeth. Again the Catholicity of the justice of the ages of faith did not admit of those separations and divisions which appear in the writings of Macrobius and Plotinus, who enumerate four degrees of virtue, or of Plato, who even presents virtue occasionally in several detached parts, as piety in Euthyphro, fortitude in Laches, temperance in Charmides, friendship in Lysides; but as in Meno it was beheld in connection with all virtue. Some indeed of the ancient sages, as Menedinus of Eretria, and Ariston of Chio, and also Zeno, maintained that virtue was one and without plurality of parts, though men spoke of it under different terms;‡ but Crysippus thought that each virtue was something distinct and perfect in itself, and so introduced, as Plato says, a whole swarm of virtues into philosophy. Duns Scotus observed, “that there is no distinction of essential perfections in God;”§ quoting St. Augustin, “Non sicut in creatura sapientia et justitia sunt duæ qualitates, ita in Deo, sed quæ justitia ipsa est, et bonitas.”|| Similarly, the fruits of essential grace in men emanating from one principle were held to be in necessary connection with each other. “Neither is there,” as St. Clemens Alexandrinus saith, “one virtue for women and another for men, but one and the same for both; for temperance and justice, and all other virtues are alike to be cultivated by man and woman, freeman and slave, since one and the same virtue belongs to one and the same nature.”¶ “Virtutis vis,” says Marsilius Ficinus, “in unione potius quam in divisione consistit.”\*\* St. Gregory speaks to the same effect, “Neque enim unaquæque verè virtus est, si mixta aliis virtutibus non est.”†† Natural and imperfect virtues might exist separately, but it was deemed impossible for any one to be perfectly gentle and mild, without being at the same time chaste, brave, magnanimous, humble, sober, just, and prudent, in the same manner as one sin could not be committed, and but one sin. An ancient author illustrates this by an example, “An injury is inflicted; faith teaches that revenge is displeasing to Jesus Christ, and by that light the understanding says that we must not take

\* Id. Ibid.

† In III. d. 37. Qu. I. Art. 6.

‡ Plutarch de Virtute.

§ In Lib. I. Sent. Dist. VI. II. 4. 9.

|| S. August, de Trin. XV. 5.

¶ Stromat. Lib. IV. 8.

\*\* Epist. Lib. I.

†† S. Greg. Mor. Lib. I. c. 9.

revenge. Hope says, by conquering this temptation we shall be nearer acquiring an immense good. Charity says, our neighbor is to be beloved even when he does evil. Prudence says this is a favorable opportunity of preparing a crown for ourselves. Justice admonishes us to give to every one what belongs to him, and it is for God to punish evil. Modesty says, do not admit the deformity of anger, which has so hideous an exterior. Humility says that we should give place to others, and that we deserve more than we receive. Temperance forbids us to indulge in the hateful pleasure of vengeance. Magnanimity says, be gentle not only on small but on great occasions. Behold how the acts of virtue conspire and cohere !”\* This truth Giles of Colonna illustrates, by remarking that a magnanimous man is necessarily humble,† and St. Clemens Alexandrinus by showing that temperance is not confined to pleasures only, but that there is a temperance in regard to the tongue, and to possessions, and to desires. “By these two things,” says Richard of St. Victor, “pride and concupiscence, the prince of this world, dwelleth in us, by pride in the mind, by concupiscence in the flesh. ‘Venit princeps hujus mundi,’ says Christ, ‘et in me non habet quicquam.’ For all the possession of the ancient enemy is sin, to which is attached as an inheritance for ever, a land full of thorns and briars, a land cursed of God, covered with obscurity and darkness. Of all this substance nothing was found in Christ.”‡ St. Odo, the second abbot of Cluni, reduces these to one principle of injustice, observing that pride is the mother of all vices, and that therefore the Psalmist says, ‘In superbia ceciderunt, qui operantur iniquitatem.’ “No one,” he remarks, “works iniquity externally, unless he has fallen internally by pride : for if the spirit be devoutly subject to the Lord, the flesh cannot unlawfully raise itself against the spirit ; but if it proudly despises its author, justly is it despised by its vassal flesh. Therefore, the venom of lust is borne from the root and merit of pride.”§ In short, those who understood and followed the broad commandments of Catholicism, beheld, as the Psalmist beautifully expresses it, the end of all perfection—in manners, as in wisdom, in arts and sciences, as well as in morality and life ; for it requires but a moment’s reflection to discern that the justice of the ages of faith extended to the sphere of art. What good faith and integrity is observable in their very architecture ? Here is no affectation and desire of temporary applause. The most obscure and retired parts are as elaborately finished as those which are the most exposed to view. Ascend to those aerial deserts, to the highest summit of the spires of a Gothic cathedral, to which the tiler ventures to creep with trembling. You will often find there, solitary under the eye of God, exposed to the blasts of the eternal wind, some delicate work, some masterpiece of sculpture, on which the pious workman wore away his life ; not a name, not a sign, not a letter ; he worked

\* Instruct. Novitiorum, cap. 22. aut P. Joan. à Jesu Mariæ. † De Regim. Prin. II. 1. 25.

‡ Richard. S. Vict. Sermo. in Die. Paschæ.

§ S. Odonis Abb. Clun. Collationum, Lib. II. Bibliothec. Cluniacensis.

for God only, and for the remedy of his soul. In pagan arts, as in morals, the maxim universal agreed with that sentiment of Phædra,

*ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἴη μήτε λαμβάνειν καλὰ,  
μήτ' αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ ἀρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν.\**

Indeed in relation to art the admirable efficacy of the Catholic morals has been often pointed out, and though in the third book we had occasion to consider it in detail, I cannot leave this specular mount without casting again one look towards it. Come ascend with me to the high regions of the cathedral of Fribourg in Brisgaw. Let us rest awhile in this octagonal hall, within the tower commanding such a delightful view over the city and the mountains of the Black Forest. This cathedral was built by Erwin von Sternbach, who was also the architect of that at Strasburg, a man, as a living French critic observes, who ought to have the renown of Michael Angelo; but the middle ages were careless of human glory, and Erwin von Sternbach was more anxious about his salvation in Paradise than to obtain immortality in the human memory. Truly, the thirst for justice in the middle ages supplied men with prodigious means for performing great things, even of a material order. As Spedalieri says, "Their system of ethics was efficacious, administering an internal force not only to sustain man in the practice of his duty, but to encourage and assist him in the development of his genius." Our modern generations have their budgets and their taxes; they had faith which could inspire thoughts that would never occur to our councils of civil works, and which could realize them with a facility that would never arise from the vote of a parliament or the approbation of a scientific journal. But let us descend and proceed.

The general ideas of justice in the ages of faith, were derived from the example of Christ, from the models which he proposed in his instructions, and from the spectacle and observation of nature. "Christ," says the Master of the Sentences, "died to be for man both form and cause, The form of virtue and humility, the cause of glory and freedom, the form of obeying God unto death, and the cause of deliverance and beatitude."† Hence, as Marsilius Ficinus says, "Christ was a certain living moral book of divine philosophy, sent from heaven and manifested to human eyes to teach us true justice, as possessing nothing of his own, and rendering to God and man what is due to each,—to God adoration, and to man benevolence."‡ A great writer of those times, after citing the words of the Gospel, "teaching them to do whatsoever I have commanded you," proceeds thus, "O happy and meritorious obedience, which thinks of nothing but constantly how to fulfil the will of our heavenly Father! O how holy the soul which endeavors to resign itself and to render its whole life conformable to the manners of Christ! Truly Jesus Christ hath left the best example of living to us all. He is the mas-

\* Hippolyt. 402.

† Lib. III. Distinct. 18.

‡ Marsil. Ficin. de Christiana Relig. cap. 23.



ter of all ; he himself is the book and rule of the religious, he himself the convent of monks, he himself the text and gloss of the decretals ; he is the form of the life of clerics, the doctrine of laics, the light of the faithful, the joy of the just, the glory of angels, the end and consummation of all the desires of the saints.”\* The second of these rules is beautifully illustrated by Hugo of St. Victor, who after citing the divine words, “ unless you become like little children,” speaks in the following manner :

“ What then are the manners of a boy ? He is not solicitous nor covetous : ne exercises himself in simple and innocent play, and he so loves what is domestic, that if he were even transferred to a throne, he would rather desire the ancient things and what he was accustomed to. He knows his father’s grounds ; now he is in the field, now in the garden, now in the orchard, now in the meadow, now at the fountain, now in the vineyard. He knows the peculiar delights which belong to each season of the year. In the spring he follows ploughing and sowing, in the summer, reaping, and in the autumn the vintage. Every where he has pastime, mirth, refection, delight ; and besides these daily and domestic feasts which he enjoys at home, by going out sometimes to taste servants’ fare, he returns with more relish to former delights ; he loves to gather the new fruits, to roast the corn before it be matured in the ear, to pick out the first ripe grapes, to carry home a young bird with great joy to the house in order to love and nourish it. If he knows that his father is about to go to any town or castle, or to market, or to some solemnity with the intention of returning immediately, he wishes to go with him that he may see new and unaccustomed things, so that on his return he may relate what he has seen to his comrades, describing the appearance of the men, the situation of the place, the extent of the city, the height of the house, the abundance of things on sale. Thus when he knows that he is to return, he gladly leaves home ; but if he were not to hope for a return, and if any one were to attempt to compel him to go forth, he would not leave his father’s house without lamentable groans and great sorrow. He is glad to have diversion abroad, but he wishes to have no permanent abode any where excepting in his father’s house with his domestics, among whom he was born and with whom he was bred ; he desires to live with them, and to grow old amongst them, nor would he be separated from them even in death, but he would wish to be always with those who have been known and dear to him in life. Nothing beyond this he seeks, nothing more does he desire. In like manner then, let us study to converse in the house of the Lord, and we too shall find peace and rest, and pleasure ; let us be simple, not desiring foreign things, loving more the delights which God hath prepared for us, and which are found in his house, rather than the blandishments of this world. Here we have transparent fountains, flowery meadows, wide and swelling fields, rich vineyards, abundant flocks, fertile crops, fruitful trees, irrigated

\* Thom. à Kempis, Serm. I. Pars III.

gardens, and delights of every kind, all in short that the mind can desire or possess. Do you ask what are these fountains, meadows, and gardens? The examples of the just, the sources of wisdom, and the sweets of all virtue; for we have our feet directed in the ways of the commandments of God, that remembering his mercies which have been from all generations, we may exercise our hearts and enkindle our desire in his love: we can contemplate all the works of our restoration, from the beginning to the end of the world, according to the course of time, the events of things, and the deeds of men.”\* Finally, manners were not left without participating in the influence of that wisdom which is derived from the spectacle and observation of the visible world. The great guides of Catholic ages were men of Wordsworth’s type, who intensely studied with a painter’s eye and poet’s heart, all the spirit-moving imagery of earth and sea, and air: men, in short, whose whole lives flowed in a course of sympathy divine with nature. Much they learned from each walk through their forest glades, where birds and brooks from leafy dells chimed forth delicious music; for not alone the cooing of the gentle dove, but every bird and flower inspired their meditative hearts. The efficacy and justice of this rule must be even in a peculiar manner apparent, methinks, to those who are fallen upon the present days, though so little consonant with the muse; for when they walk on a morning in the spring through those parks and gardens of their capitals, once the haunts, perhaps, of the hooded brethren, of Francis or St. Bruno, and behold the fresh innocent generation of young leaves bursting forth simultaneously with such order,—the only heaven-inspired things that now remain there,—it is impossible for them not to think occasionally with astonishment and sorrow on the crowd of intellectual creatures around them so obdurate to justice, and disobedient and out of tune amidst the sweet creation that was intended to utter one universal voice of love and praise. Hugo de St. Victor, in his work entitled, “On Beasts,” instructs men in various duties from the example of divers irrational animals and other creatures. He, too, like the great poet of the Lakes, would remark in speaking of the wren and her nest, that “The hermit has no finer eye for shadowy quietness.” The monks had frequently that intimate acquaintance with the manners of birds, which Olaus Magnus evinces in his history, where he describes with such amusing simplicity, those of the northern tribes.

It was in the spirit of those times to consider beasts and birds as endowed with characters analogous to human; and so successful were the fabulists that almost every bird and beast was known to the middle ages as a personage under an appropriate name, which in some languages, as with Renard in the French, by a singular fate remained to the animnal, having superseded its own generic appellation. Giles of Colonna, too, throughout his work on government, cites the example of animals to instruct men in various moral duties; and Bartholomew Glaunville, of the family of the counts of Suffolk, an English Franciscan of the fourteenth century, followed in the same track in his work on the advantages of philosophy to a the-

ologian, in which, with learning, and subtle observation, he explained the properties of material things, by means of which he threw light on difficult passages of the Holy Scripture. The most interesting illustration of this rule may be found, perhaps, in the rhyme composed by Alanus de Insulis, the universal doctor.

“ Omnis mundi creatura  
Quasi liber et pictura,  
Nobis est et speculum,  
Nostræ vitæ, nostræ mortis,  
Nostri status, nostræ sortis,  
Fidele signaculum.

Nostrum statum pingit rosa.  
Nostri status decens glosa,  
Nostræ vitæ lectio,  
Quæ dum primo mane floret.  
Defloratus flos effloret  
Vespertino senio.  
Ergo spirans flos expirat  
In pallorem, dum delirat  
Oriendo moriens.

Sic ætatis ver humanæ,  
Juventutis primo mane,  
Reflorescit paululum.  
Mane tamen hoc excludit,  
Vitæ vesper, dum concludit  
Vitale corpusculum.

Cujus decor dum perorat  
Ejus decus, mox deflorat  
Ætas, in qua defluit.  
Fit flos fœnum, gemma lutum :  
Homo cinis, dum tributum  
Homo morti tribuit.

Cujus vita, cujus esse  
Pœna, labor et necesse,  
Vitam morte claudere.  
Sic mors vitam, risum luctus,  
Umbra diem, portum fluctus,  
Mane claudit vespere.

In nos primum dat insultum  
Pœna mortis gerens vultum  
Labor mortis histrio.  
Nos proponit in laborem :  
Nos assumit in dolorem :  
Mortis est conclusio.



Ergo clausum sub hac lege  
 Statum tuum homo lege,  
 Tuum esse respice.  
 Quid fuisti nasciturus,  
 Quid in præsens quid futurus,  
 Diligenter inspicere.

Luge poenam, culpam plange  
 Motus fræna, fastum frange,  
 Pone supercilia.  
 Mentis rector et auriga  
 Mentem rege, fluxus riga  
 Ne defluant in devia."

Thus were truth and justice taught by every garden, grove, and field, which preached, though mute, "of all things blending into one."

---

## CHAPTER XI.



ENOUGH has been seen to prove the fact of a second creation of the human race, albeit, in harmony with the first, and only a fresh manifestation of an endless love. Still somewhat remains to complete this scene of our historic vision—something as yet but faintly sketched, or left for others to supply, which we should strive to develop with more force and precision. Attentive consideration is due, for instance, to the fact that the justice of the ages of faith did not flow from the inclination or partialities of individuals, but from the authoritative promulgation of a universal law recognized as divine. The character of all ages which have not been under the influence of faith, is independent of authority. "If I should resolve to fast at all, I will fast on whatever day I choose, by my own choice, and with full liberty." It was thus that Ærius used to speak according to St. Epiphanius. One might remark here how unamiable and offensive even to the eyes of humanity is this condition of self-will, and how the principle of Catholic obedience imparted both grace and security to virtue. Does a youth practise any act from a private opinion which is counter to the common voice? He is referred to the judgment of men more acute or more experienced than himself, and if he persist he may, perhaps, very justly incur the odium attached to singularity and obstinate perverseness: but in yielding to the highest authority, he is invulnerable, for if he should incur

blame in the fulfilment of duty, he will be supported by a reliance not on his own abilities and superior judgment, but on the cloud of witnesses, on the unerring wisdom and infallible reason of the church, which commands him to adhere though he should have to stand alone, to the maxims of faith and of the ancient honor. Hence it is noted by S. Bonaventura, "quod propter alterius scandalum non debemus recedere a virtute justitiæ," "for our Lord both in word and deed gave scandal to the Pharisees,"\* a remark to be pressed on those who are always trembling lest by observing Catholic manners, they should offend persons who are separated from unity. It was, however, the determination of the will which constituted the chief advantage arising from an authoritative rule of manners; for however magnificently some philosophers may declaim, justice hath but little to expect on earth when men are wholly left to the guidance of a mind which has banished the sense of responsibility, and to maintain their principles on the same ground as that on which the giant of Homer defended himself against the reproach of his captive who warned him to beware of Jove, the avenger of injured guests, to whom he replied, *Νήπιος εἶς, ὦ ξείν',*—"I care not for Jove, my will is my law."

During the middle ages, doctrines were the source of all laws and discipline; as canons were nothing but conclusions drawn from theological principles, that is, from the Gospel.† "When pride and spiritual riches, and the liberty of a light mind existed, there," says the author of *Theologia Germanica*, "could be no Christian or true imitator of Christ."‡ "In hac vita," continues this writer, speaking of the Christian life, "perit omnis ipsitas, ego, meum, et similia. Finally, nothing is beheld or sought after but good, on account of good and as good. But where there is a false light, there is no regard to Christ or to virtue; whatever is accommodated and pleasant to nature, is then sought for and embraced. Hence arises a false and inordinate liberty, by which a man is rendered secure and negligent of every thing. True light is the seed of God, and therefore it bears the fruit of God, but false light is the seed of Satan, and where that is sown, there grows up the fruit of Satan and Satan himself."

Æschylus terms God *Μέγας εὐθυνοῦς βροτῶν*.|| This was in every sense a true definition in the middle ages. God, not human opinion, directed immediately the manners of men, which while dependent upon doctrines for their rule, derived their force and efficacy from the authority of a divine legislator. "One thing only is to be feared," says St. Chrysostom, "that is sin." Alcuin proclaimed this in verse,

"Plus æterna Dei Christi est metuenda potestas,  
Quam terrena quidem, quæ velut umbra volat."¶

The Archduke Leopold William, of Austria, assumed for device upon his

\* *Meditationes Vitæ Christi*, cap. 38. † *Benedict. XVI. De Sacrificio Missæ Præfat.*, XXI.

‡ *Theologia Germanica*, cap. 24.

§ *Id.* cap. 38.

|| *Eumenid.* 273.

¶ *Mabillon vet. Analect.*

shield, the words "Timore domini," to express the sentiment which was ever present to his mind. "I charge you," says St. Gregory to Justin, in his letter to the Prætor of Sicily, which is taken into the decrees of the church, "by the omnipotent God, to whose tremendous judgment we are to give an account of all our actions, to have always before your eyes the extension of his glory. 'Quam sit vita brevis aspiciat; ad quem quandoque ituri estis judicem ejus judicium potestatem geritis cogitate.'"<sup>\*</sup> You perceive on what motives he placed reliance. "It is not advisable that we should be for ever silent to those under our authority," says the Abbot Elfric, writing to Wulstan, archbishop of York, "for if it be not the principal herald, who is to announce that the Judge cometh?" Such was, in fact, the summary of all the ecclesiastical charges, "the Judge cometh." So far were they from asserting the simple and unconditional benevolence of God, and on that assumption going on, like Paley, to found a moral system and a rule of life, as if God were not a God of justice as well as a God of mercy.

Men in these days talk of securing justice by constitutional laws, by their representative assemblies, by publicity as the surest test, and the force of general opinion as the best rule of human action; but it was not by such means, which have more show than real efficacy, that society was protected during the ages of faith. It was by the fear of heaven, it was by the preaching of the clergy, it was even by the warnings of solemn poets; as when a Martial d'Auvergne, in his *Vigils of the death of Charles the Seventh*, concludes with such words as these:

"Et n'est roy, empereur, duc, conte,  
Qui ne soit subject à la mort,  
Et qu'il ne faille rendre conte  
De ce qu'on a fait droit ou tort."<sup>†</sup>

It was by a Dante disclosing those visions of future punishment, placing before men's eyes

"The border of the crimson seething-flood,  
Whence from those steep'd within, loud shrieks arose;"

That region of eternal woe

"Where sighs, with lamentations and loud moans,  
Resounded through the air pierc'd by no star,  
That e'en he wept at entering."<sup>‡</sup>

It is not unimportant to remark that the views respecting the motives of human action in more recent times, have been opposed to all the primitive traditions of mankind. Demophon, in the *Heraclidæ* of Euripides, had three reasons not to deny the petition of Iolaus and the suppliants,—the remembrance of their near relation in blood, the debt of gratitude which he still owed to their father, but what was the greatest and above all, the thought of Jove and reverence for his altar. §

<sup>\*</sup> Ivois Caront. Decret. Pars. XVI. cap. 18.    <sup>†</sup> Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roi Charles VII.

<sup>‡</sup> X.



Finally, the morality of the ages of faith, was not superstitious or delusive, but spiritual and living. Those devotions which we examined in the last book, those supplications of the blessed friends of God, were not to be sterile, empty and deceptive things. "What sort of justice would it be," says St. Chrysostom, "to venerate the saints and to neglect sanctity? The first step of devotion is to love holiness, and afterwards those that are holy: without reason, therefore, doth he honor the just, who loveth not justice." To live well, in the language of the middle ages, was to live by faith; and that, as far as related to the sphere of ordinary justice, was to live, as the Roman philosopher says, "Constanter, gravior, sapienter, fortiter." Devotion knew of no prayers which did not include imitation. It may wound the pride of men professedly philosophers, to hear that the chaplet would dispense them from consulting the Stagyrte, but nothing is more true, for history alone is sufficient to prove that no discourses of the ethic page were wanting to the church, "*quæ ædificatur ut civitas, cujus participatio ejus in idipsum.*"

Modern historians having read that King Robert caused holy relics to be secretly removed from the shrine upon which certain persons, who would probably perjure themselves, were about to swear, have concluded that the morality of these ages was little better than abject superstition, proving clearly the justice of their affirmation that the science of morals is now better understood; but they should remark that the error which they ascribe to this devout king, arising from a weakness that is at all times in human nature, was expressly denounced by writers of that age. Evidently that act was merely the result of his wish to prevent unhappy men from accumulating sin, by adding sacrilege to perjury; or at the most, it merely indicated an opinion which has the sanction of the legislature at the present day, that the asseveration of a falsehood upon a sacred object, as the holy scriptures, was more to be dreaded than a simple utterance of the same without such formalities, though that is an opinion which abstractedly the moral writers of the middle age condemned. "It is thought by some," says Iona, in his celebrated work *De Institutione Laicali*, "that he only is obnoxious to the crime of perjury who falsely swears over the bones of some holy man, or over relics, or upon the altar or the Gospel, but he who invokes God upon any thing, whether great or small, is to be held guilty."\*

The importance attached to diverse minute acts, has also been supposed to argue a degradation in the morals of the middle ages; though if we attend to the reasons for which they were inculcated, and hear the explanations which were continually given respecting them, and observe their practical consequences in history, a judicious inquirer will be slow to assent to any such judgment. Men of philosophic heads, who were ardently attached to Christian simplicity, like Jerome

\* *Ionæ Aurelianensis Episcop. de Institut. Laicali, Lib. II. cap. 25, apud Dacher. Spicileg. tom. I.*

Savanorola, were able easily to prove that Catholic manners were not superstitious, though they exactly followed all the approved ceremonies of the Roman church ;\* and saints of the desert, who had long experience in the direction of human minds, could affirm with perfect conviction that if they had been practised, some men, whose crimes stand in historic records, would not have fallen. "If Peter," says blessed John Climachus, "had repeated to himself sixty or an hundred times on his way to Olivet, 'Dixi, custodiam vias meas, ut non delinquam in lingua mea,' he would not so easily have thrice denied his Lord."† When questioning history in relation to such duties, if not great things are to be the result of our investigation, I hope it will be such as are well; for, as Demosthenes says in Stobæus, 'Not what is great is well, but what is well is great.' And this, I believe, will be the issue, for the moralists of the middle ages might truly say with Raban Maur, "Ubi etiam cavendus est æternus interitus, omnia sunt magna quæ dicimus."‡

Lewis of Grenada, after quoting our Lord's words to the Pharisee, in which he summed up all the particular acts of veneration which Mary Magdalen had performed towards him when anointing his feet, adds, "My mind receives a wonderful consolation from this enumeration of the offices, for I conclude from it with what eyes the infinite goodness of God contemplates the actions of pious men, when all the circumstances of a good work, and as I may say, particles, are so distinctly noted, that a simple duty is divided minutely into as many parts as it has circumstances, to each of which a reward is given."§ These words furnish the key to a mystery involving much that gives offence to the moderns in the morality of the ages of faith. Even when abuse may have crept in, the superstition did not arise from the external act, but from the sole cupidities of man, which would have been no less in action though there had been no such external act. It is a gross error to suppose that we can get rid of the evil by changing its form. "When the Corsair promises wax, the galley is in danger," say the Spaniards. But were devout men, the contemporaries of St. Jerome, therefore superstitious, who offered their lights before the shrines of the saints, as a sublime symbol of the honor due to the friends of God? And have the moderns eradicated the superstition from amongst themselves by removing the lights and the shrines? The men of latter ages in general have fallen into this error, which has been able to disorganize the whole frame of the social state. In what society was superstition more hateful, than in that which was frankly Catholic? and in what had it greater force, than in that which professed to be reformed? Fuller acknowledges that too many in his days of reform were like Pharaoh's magicians, who could conjure up with their charms more new frogs, but could not remove those multitudes of frogs which were there before. With respect to the supposed insig-

\* Savanorola de Simplicitate Vitæ Christianæ, cap. I.

† Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. c. 32.

§ Id. In Festo B. Mariæ Magdal. Concio. II.

† Grad. XI.

nificance of certain actions recommended by the Catholic moralists, men would do well to pause before they censure.

Cicero extols the saying of Pythagoras, "Tum maxime, et pietatem et religionem versari in animis, cum rebus divinis operam daremus;" and the saying of Thales, that all visible things were full of divinity, so that the divinity should be in the eyes as well as in the minds of men.\* But a more striking fact is adduced in evidence by John Picus of Mirandola, when he shows, in allusion to this subject, that one of the twelve conditions of a lover, is to love all things which belong to him that is loved, all his friends, houses, vests, and images.† All these minute observances might be vindicated, in the words even of a great modern poet, who says,

"Thing and thought  
Mix strangely ; trifles light, and partly vain,  
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler being :  
Yes, lady, while about your neck is wound  
(Your casual glance oft meeting) this bright cord,  
What witchery, for pure gifts of inward seeing  
Lurks in it, Memory's helper, Fancy's lord,  
For precious tremblings in your bosom found!" ‡

The saying of Gerson had become a maxim with spiritual men, that God was a rewarder not of verbs but of adverbs ; that is, he did not regard so much the substance of the action, as the manner and circumstances belonging to it, which grammarians express by adverbial terminations. The more noble theologians held with Drexelius, in his golden little book "*De recta intentione*," that a virtual intention in the performance of particular actions, although sufficient for the moral integrity of the work, is not sufficient for procuring an increase of grace. Moreover, it should be observed, that all the rewards of devotion of necessity implied holiness or amendment of manners, and that the performance of no exercise of piety was reconcilable with a neglect of any one of the essential duties of a virtuous life. Against the superstitions or vanities of the learned, the moralists of the middle ages were equally guarded.

"What do the holy Apostles teach us ?" demands S. Bonaventura, "not the dramatic, not how to read Plato, not how to entangle ourselves in the subtilties of Aristotle, not how to learn always, and never to come to the knowledge of truth ; but they teach me how to live. Do you think it a small matter to know how to live? truly, it is a great thing, yea, the greatest of all ; for he does not live who is inflated with pride, debased by luxury, and infested with other plagues : since this is not to live but to confound life, and to approach to the gates of death :—but you live well if you live orderly, sociably, and humbly ; orderly with regard to yourself sociably in relation to others, and humbly in respect to God ; orderly if you be careful in your conversation, to preserve your ways right in the sight

\* De Legibus, II. 11.

‡ XII. *Regulæ Dirigentes*.

‡ Wordsworth.



of the Lord, and in the sight of your neighbor ; sociably if you seek to be loved and to love, and to show yourself gentle and affable, and to bear not only patiently, but willingly, the infirmities of your brethren, as well of their manners as of their bodies ; humbly, if doing all this, you avoid the spirit of vanity, and deny all consent to it.”\*

Indeed, to display the living character of the Catholic morality during the middle ages, words need not be multiplied. The foundation of all sanctity was known to be purity of conscience,† which was only attainable by the supernatural strength communicated in the mysteries of the Christian faith. “The life of the interior man,” says Richard of St. Victor, “is divine grace, for as the body can do nothing without its life, the soul, so our interior man can do nothing good without divine grace.”‡ In regard to the Divine Scriptures, men paid no Judaic and superstitious regard to the letter, but with an intellectual reverence and evangelical freedom they sought to imbibe and propagate the spirit. Petrus de Riga, of the church of Rheims, a scholastic and poet of the twelfth century, did not scruple to comprise the decalogue in four verses :

“Sperne Deos, fugito perjuriam, sabbata serva,  
Sit tibi patris honor, sit tibi matris amor  
Non sis occisor, fur, mœchus, testis iniquus :  
Vicinisque thorum, resque caveto suas.”§

Lines so little suspected by men of the middle ages of hidden mischief, that they are quoted as the decalogue by Robert de Sorbon, in his sermon on conscience.

In truth, there is nothing more striking in the whole moral history of those times, than the prodigious vitality which distinguished men in regard to justice. Far were they from imagining that negative merit in morals was sufficient for the fulfilment of that which was to assuage the soul’s long thirst. St. Cæsarius, of Arles, had especially addressed those who think it sufficient for eternal life, to avoid evil without wishing to do good, which discourse had become universally celebrated. “There is a certain race of men in the holy church,” says Hugo de St. Victor, “to whom to believe, means only not to contradict faith, who live as they were born, not in loving or in approving that in which they were born ; who, if they had been born elsewhere, would not have been of the faithful, for they hold faith through the custom of life, not from love ; and there is another race of men more attentively considering the state of human life, and on that account beginning to fluctuate in faith since they behold many averse and alienated from faith, and yet who, being led by the piety of faith, from two doubtful things, choose that which they learned from the Christian doctrine ; and there is another

\* *Meditat. Vitæ Christi*, cap. 48.

† *Ludovic Blossii Consolat. Pussillan*. I.

‡ *Richard S. Vict. de Eruditione Hominis Interioris*, Lib. I cap. 3.

§ *Bulæus Hist. Univers. Paris*, Tom. II.

race of men, certain and confirmed in their faith, whom God confirms either by external miracles, or by internal inspiration." \* During the middle ages, men who were in earnest in every thing, set their hearts on whatever their reason judged best; and said, in the expressive language of their romantic writers, "Le cueur faict l'homme et non mye le corps. Car le cueur est sire du corps et le corps est serf du cueur."† They possessed what an ancient disciple of the Stagyrice styles a certain depth and greatness of soul—*ἔχειν δὲ τι βάθος τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μέγεθος*.‡ In short, it was known that in every state all depended upon what was the will. Indeed, St. Augustin says, "Omnis nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt."§ And he illustrates this by citing the instance of the good and bad angels, of whom the nature is the same, the will different.|| The inference is drawn by Dante :

—— "Hence thou must infer  
That love is germin of each virtue in ye,  
And of each act no less, that merits pain."¶

St. Thomas says, that every act of man is good and meritorious, or morally evil and demeritorious, according as it proceeds or not from the deliberation of reason. Indeed, not only as his disciple, the blessed doctor, shows this whole beatitude of the just, is eminently of choice, for as prudence is in the intellect, and the ten virtues of the Stagyrice in the sensitive appetite, so justice is in the will; \*\* but also St. Bernardine, of Sienna, showed that each of the eight beatitudes implies and requires an intention, "for it is not said," he remarks, "beati qui tristantur," but "beati qui lugent."†† "All can be just," says Richard or St. Victor, "if they perfectly wish to be just."‡‡ And again he proceeds even further, "Sola enim justa velle est jam justum esse." §§ The answer of St. Thomas, the angel of the school, to his sister, who asked what she should do to be saved, was this "wish to be saved!" "O summam Dei Patris liberalitatem," exclaims Picus, of Mirandula, "summam et admirandam hominis felicitatem, cui datum id habere quod optat, id esse quod velit."||| Such is the lesson conveyed to Dante by the spirit of Marco Lombardo :

"Light have ye still to follow evil or good,  
And of the will free power, which, if it stand,  
Firm and unwearied in heaven's first essay,  
Conquers at last, so it be cherish'd well,  
Triumphant over all."

The Christian religion had, in fact, formalized and developed the great truth

\* Hugo de S. Vict. Eruditionis Theolog. ex Miscellan, Lib. I. tit. 18.

† Gyron le Courtois f. CCXXXVIII. ‡ De Virtut. et Vit. § De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIV. 6.

|| Id. Lib. XII. 1.

¶ Purg. XVII.

\*\* Ægid. Rom. de Regim. II. I. c. 3.

†† S. Bern. Senens. Tom. III. Serm. VII.

‡‡ Richardi S. Victor, de Præparatione Animi ad Contemplatione, cap. 2.

§§ Id De Contemplatione, Lib. III. 16. ||| Joan Picus Mirandula de Hominum Dignitate.

which was first disclosed in the Judaic traditions, that evil was voluntary and immaterial; for in all the ancient systems of the East evil is represented as involuntary, and its action wholly material, synonymous with the concupiscence of nature. What was it, in fact, which imparted that moral grandeur which has surprised and delighted so many modern authors in the history of the middle ages, prompting the poet to exclaim :

“In those old romantic days,  
Mighty were the soul’s commandments  
To support, restrain, or raise.  
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,  
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.”\*

And giving occasion to the historian’s remark, that even times of little learning as the fifth century in France, were nevertheless ages in which abounded men of great characters.† It is not that in former times the whole of nature was more living and spiritual than at present, but that there was a hearty desire and a decided will. The moral grandeur arose from the prevalence of that wish, which was the desire so beautifully expressed by Richard of St. Victor, “to attain to that life in which no one dies, no one hungers, no one thirsts, no one fears an enemy, no one betrays a friend.”‡ “For what else constitutes a character,” as Novalis remarks, “but a perfectly formed will?”§ What is it that now prevents men otherwise free from attaining to that high intellectual sovereignty, possessed by so many members of the heavenly republic in the middle ages? It is the fatalism introduced by the religious innovators of the sixteenth century. It is the opinion that man is but a passive instrument under grace; for that was their main point. So that Erasmus, in his work *De Libero Arbitrio*, struck a blow which went to the very heart of Luther, as that arch chieftain felt. “Who will deliver me from Erasmus?” was his cry. “May God take away Erasmus from me!” His anger against other men seemed, as Michelet remarked, rather an anger of good humor; he was red when he wrote against the Popes, but he grew pale when he replied to Erasmus.

What is it which renders the institutions of catholicism, as they existed in the middle ages, so odious to the moderns, that the whole bent of their mind is now to sweep them from the earth? It is their own want of a fixed and decided will. This want alone renders hateful to them the monastic rule, the discipline of holy orders, and the inviolable character of the marriage state. These wavering reeds, so shaken by every wind, seem to fear the immutability which belongs essentially to whatever is Catholic; they would ask delay; they would have liberty to return; they may wish it to-day, but will they wish it to-morrow? Oh! these deliber-

\* Wordsworth.

† Staudenmaier Johan. *Scotus Erigena und die Wissenschaft Seiner Zeit*. I. 64.

‡ Richardi S. Vict. *de Baptismo Christi*.

§ *Schriften*. II. 284



ate fools, how often, when they do choose, they have the wisdom by their wit to lose !

The spirit of the Catholic morality was wholly opposed to this practical fatalism, which is so characteristic of men at the present day, and which gives the true explanation why the language and conduct of many ingenious and learned persons are in contradiction with each other. The principle of their false security is combatted by St. Chrysostom, in his homilies upon Providence. God has said, "I have placed before you fire and water, life and death ; stretch forth your hand : I leave you free to choose."\* The demon, on the contrary, says, "It is not in your power to make a choice : necessity has pronounced for you : it is for you to submit." So we may hear it argued by some who say, you have been born under this discipline ; your relations, your friends, have all professed it ; all your duties in life require you to remain attached to it, at least externally. Your name is chooser, but you cannot choose. The Catholic religion may be true, but you have not been destined to embrace it, as is evident from the circumstance of your birth in a country where it is rejected. But if necessity exists, to resume the reasoning of St. Chrysostom, "there is no such thing as justice ; if necessity exists, faith, religion, are only vain words, without any sense ; if necessity exists, God does not exist ; if necessity exists, there is no such thing as virtue, no such thing as crime ; all our actions are indifferent ; all our miseries insoluble ; praise, blame, shame, honesty, laws, all are but empty sound, signifying nothing."† "There is no essential cause for an evil will," says St. Augustin, "but only a deficient cause—the want of a right will, as in avarice, and luxury, and vain-glory, where there is merely a want of a just preference of what is infinitely more valuable, more beautiful, and more noble, than what is chosen."‡ The Gentile philosopher observed, that the fountain and head of miseries, and the root of all evils, was a conviction that no disease of the mind was voluntary, and a matter of opinion or choice,§ the groundlessness of which, Virgil shows in those four words :

"Possunt, quia posse videntur."||

During the middle ages, the error which denies the freedom of the human will, nearly disappears ; and it was reserved for the sophist of Geneva, in the sixteenth century, to exhibit to the world, in his own person, and not without occasional indications of the interior horror consequent on such a combination, a legist and a fatalist as a reformer of philosophy. The errors attributed to the unhappy Gottschalk, of Fulda, in the ninth century, may have partly arisen from the calamities of his own life, to which Staudenmaier, with great probability, ascribes them.¶ No sooner had he disclosed his sentiments on predestination, while on a visit to Count Eberhard of Frioul, than the scandal spread far and near. Raban Maur, then Archbishop of Mayence, wrote immediately against them, summoned a synod

\* Eccl. IV. 17.

† Hom. V.

‡ De Civit. Dei, Lib. XII. 8, 9.

§ Tuscul. IV

|| Æneid. V. 231.

¶ Johan. Scot. Erig. I. 175.

in 848 to condemn them, called upon Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, his metropolitan, to take measures to prevent him from infusing such noxious doctrine into the minds of that Christian people, and exposed the practical and fatal evils that would result from such an opinion in a letter to that prelate, who, as far as the cause of truth was concerned, must be acknowledged to have written with ability and justice.\* Against the errors to which this question gave birth, Florus, the deacon, apologizes for writing ; observing that, “ they are easily disproved, with God’s assistance, and even shown worthy of laughter and scorn by the faithful, who are exercised in sacred reading, since they are most vain, and against faith, and full of manifest falsehood.”†

The works of Prudentius, of Troyes, of Lupus, Abbot of Ferrieres, of Ratramnus, monk of Corby, and of Amolon, Archbishop of Lyons, originating in this controversy, were all distinguished by vast erudition and profound philosophy. Finally, the Catholic doctrine on free-will and the blood of Christ, shed for all men, was confirmed and decreed by Pope Nicholas the First, in the year 859. Even the philosophic writers of the fifteenth century most addicted to subtle speculations respecting faith, such as Cardan,‡ and Marsilius Ficinus, leave the will free ; the latter besides composing a treatise in defence of free-will, declaring repeatedly in his letters that nothing is more voluntary than goodness.§ In practice, we can only trace the contrary opinion in a few detached episodes, of which Torquemada, the Spaniard, furnishes an example in the following narrative : “ One evening,” saith he, “ as I was walking with some gentlemen in the fields, adjoining a certain great city of this kingdom, we saw in a valley three men preparing a wheel for the execution of some criminal, which was to take place on the following day. ‘ There,’ said one of my companions ‘ is the executioner, a young man who it is said is a good grammarian, and of gentle manners.’ I was greatly astonished to hear this. So, upon coming to the place, I looked narrowly at the young man, who was of a pleasing mien, and seemed not more than twenty-one years of age. I asked him if he was the executioner, and he said that he was. I asked him in Latin if he had studied, and he replied with elegance, in the same language, that he had ; and I asked him of what country he was, and he replied, ‘ Since you know me to be the executioner, you ought not to ask me my country.’ ‘ But how then,’ I continued, ‘ can you have undertaken such an office as this ? Certainly, you are very guilty in this respect, since God has given you grace, and the disposition and ability to do good, and yet you do not employ his gifts as you ought.’ After hearing me with attention, he replied, ‘ Sir, my fate would have it so : I cannot resist my fate.’ Then perceiving his grand error and ignorance, I began a long discourse, showed him that there was no such thing as fate, that men had free-will, and might do what they chose, that they had no right to

\* Hincmar de Prædestin.

‡ Hieron. Card. de Libris Propriis.

† Manguin Vind. Præd. Tom. I. 585.

§ Marsil. Ficin. Epist. Lib. I.

lay the blame on fate, but on themselves, when they chose an evil instead of a good way ; in fine, he listened to me eagerly, and let fall a shower of tears to my great surprise ; and he said, 'My misfortune has proceeded from my having had hitherto this bandage over my eyes. Since it is so, I will take another course, and not dishonor my family ; for you must know, that I am of a noble family, and that I have been lost through gambling, which has reduced me to this state ; but I give thanks to God, that no one hitherto has discovered me, for my country is far from here. I shall change my life, and endeavor to follow your good advice ;' and as he never ceased to weep, he returned home with me to my house, and passed the whole night there in sighs and tears, and at break of day he departed, and I saw him no more ; but from what I observed in him, I have great hopes that he did what he promised."\*

The writers of the middle ages generally treat the opinion of the fatalists as an error exploded, which the mere view of a sower who sows grain in the fields can disperse. "Among all the goods of creation," says Richard of St. Victor, "there is nothing more sublime, nothing more worthy, than free-will, according to which man is made in the image of God."† "In this," he says, "the rational creature has an excellent dignity, that he serves his Creator voluntarily, not from compulsion."‡ In fact, the whole discipline and philosophy of the Catholic Church depended upon this doctrine. Hear again Richard : "Man presumes to mitigate the anger of the omnipotent God, and prevails, when the sentence hath gone forth, and man offers himself to death, and imposes an end on necessity. To such a height of audacity does the consummation of charity exalt the mind of man. Behold how it makes man presume beyond man, by making him presume in God."

The living morality of the Catholic states was opposed also to that systematic sloth under the mask of prudence and moderation, by which eventually the spirit of the obligation itself is sacrificed, notwithstanding the continued profession of respect for the duty which it was intended to enforce ; for by always resting satisfied with keeping within the law, the limits are at length so encroached upon, that men may have passed beyond unawares, the little which was to be observed, being performed with indifference, and perhaps reduced to a mere nominal compliance, till by degrees all is renounced, all forgotten, and men relapse to the manners of a Gentile sensuality. Milton feelingly deplores the moral condition of his contemporaries, after the vital principle of Catholicism had been lost. There were heard, indeed, on all sides, many pompous eulogies of virtue, and much boast of morality and reformation, but what was the fact ? "Custom," said he, "still is silently received for the best instructor ; filling each estate of life and profession with abject and servile principles, depressing the high and heaven-born spirit of man

\* Hexameron, 354.

† Richardi S. Vict. de Statu Interioris Hominis, I. 1. c. 3.

‡ Id. Super Apocalypsm. Lib. V. c. 9.

§ De Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis.



far beneath the condition wherein either God created him or sin hath sunk him." Such was not the custom of the middle ages; no one feared the reproach of singularity or fanaticism, when realizing in his actions the type of moral grandeur, which was in his heart. The number was not then so great of those, who, as Cicero says of Pisa, crept to honors by the error of men, and by the recommendation of smoky images, which they resembled only in color; but men, endued with faith, did oft attain in lowest poverty to highest deeds. Sloth was known as one of the seven sins that consign the soul to death; and sloth, according to the authors of the middle age, was a laziness of mind, neglecting to begin or prosecute good things. This, in fact, connected with the prodigious activity of the evil principle, is the great disease of our nature, to which the church alludes in that affecting reproach which she puts into the mouth of the divine Jesus, "*Una hora non potuistis vigilare mecum? Vel Judam non videtis, quoniam non dormit, sed festinat tradere me Judæis?*" It is to rouse men from this apathy that the Catholic mysteries are intended, for while it predominates all hopes are vain; so great is its effects that the sacred scripture says, *in imagine pertransit homo*. You may look upon us a thousand times, and you will never see us rise up and walk. We are but poor painted images; we seem to wish every moment to rise and stand on our feet, but we do not rise or stand. All justice is outraged, the children of God are hunted down and slain like wolves, in order that a remorseless band may seize the asylums which faith had constructed for them. We are called upon to rise, that is, to raise a voice in their behalf—but we rise not, we sit in silence—in *imagine pertransit homo*.

It would be too far to venture from our path were I to point out how the course of human history bears witness to the decay of the vivifying principle of Catholic morals; but we can behold the effects displayed in a remarkable manner from any point, so that they will be visible if they only regard the material monuments on which I before treated, as having been the work of faith. For observe, it is in the sixteenth century, that nearly all the great works of Christian zeal, as those of architecture, stop short. It is then that so many great undertakings are interrupted, to be no more resumed. The grandest cathedrals remain half-finished, one with its choir only erected, another with merely its nave, others without a front or a spire, sublime fragments, at the sight of which one asks, how came to disappear, all of a sudden, this giant race of masons and sculptors? How came there to be no more great foundations for the spiritual and material wants of society? It is that faith then grew weak; men began to protest and to doubt: to have no longer a perfectly-formed will, to have no strength to begin or to prosecute good things: or in other words, it was then that the custom of which Milton spoke, became fixed and naturalized among the races of men that had been for so many centuries before in honor, and with an intimate conviction of their dignity. And who, therefore, now can trace any spirit of life within the vast organization of the ancient society, where the principle of its existence has been withdrawn?

On the seats of their ancestors the moderns appear like the Roman college of Augurs in the time of Dionysius, who describes them as so cleaving to the ancient form, that when magistrates were to be elected, and candidates, having prayed in the open air at dawn of day, some one of the augurs used to declare that there was lightning on the left hand, though none appeared, and adding, that this confirmed the election.\* During the middle ages, these dry bones that we see around were living, for into all the institutions and manners of catholicism, there was infused a spirit, and no such dead empty forms, phantoms, without nerves or flesh, were ever beheld in a Christian state.

We have seen that the Catholic morality, synonymous with a determined will, depended for its strength and influence upon grace ; it remains only to observe what was its principle and motive.

St. Augustin says, that men begin often by only fearing eternal punishment, and so abstaining from sin. "Timent quidem," he continues, "sed non amant justitiam, cum autem per timorem continent se a peccato fit consuetudo justitiæ et incipit quod durum erat amari, et dulcescit Deus." † This is the state of initial love. Servilely servile fear, according to theologians, was what restrains a man from sin who retains the wish to sin, if eternal punishment were not awarded against sin. This fear was held to be an additional sin ; but servile fear, recommended by Christ, is that of a man restrained by fear, who does not speculate what he would do if there were no punishment for sin. This fear is called by St. Ambrose "the key of a fluctuating soul," and by St. Gregory, "an anchor of the mind." The spirit of the middle ages harmonized with the condescension of Divine justice ; but it rose above the limits which were prescribed. "The compunction of fear has bitterness," says Richard of St. Victor, "the compunction of love sweetness ; he who is only affected by fear, feeds, indeed, on spiritual, though not on sweet food ; but he who from the desire of eternal joy, pours forth tears, is refreshed with food both sweet and spiritual." ‡ The angel struck Peter, saying, "surge velociter," and the chains fell from his hands without any effort or violence. "The cause," says Nieremberg, "was because the light shone upon him ; for he who is enlightened by the light of truth, has no occasion to offer violence to himself to conquer his evil passions. Sweet is this mode of victory by the practical knowledge of truth." § As Richard of St. Victor says, "love generates knowledge, and puts an end to sins, through a fear of offending him, who is its object." § But this chapter has already exceeded the due limits. Let us hear the conclusion which Novalis, a disciple of the moderns, drew from a survey of the whole subject, and then we may pass on. "Practical, living Christianity," says this profound thinker, "was the old Catholic faith, which was a belief in Christ, in his mother, and in the saints. Its constant presence in life, its love for art, its deep

\* I Ps. cxxvii.

† Richardi S. de Vict. de Contemplatione, II. 71.

‡ P. Nieremberg Doct. Ascet. Lib. II. 6. 39.

§ Richardi S. Vict. in Cantica Canticorum, c. 41,

humanity, the indissolubleness of its marriage, its benevolent communicativeness, its joy in humility, obedience, and truth, attest clearly and indubitably the existence of the genuine spirit of religion.”\* A remarkable testimony, that at any period might well claim the deep attention of all who wandered with its author from the way of authority, but which assumes a still greater degree of interest when we observe that now, after men have had an interval of more than three hundred years for constructing a different system, the standard work upon morals of the nation which is looked up to as the most enlightened upon earth, is pronounced by judges of the highest capacity to rest upon a defective principle, and to be mischievous in its practical consequences.

“I think,” says an illustrious professor, in his discourse on the studies of the university in which that work is received as classical, and which justly boasts of him as its brightest ornament, “that to reject the moral sense is to destroy the foundation of all moral philosophy ; that the rule of expediency, as stated by Paley, is based in false reasoning on the attributes of God ; that the rule itself is ill suited to the capacity of men ; that it is opposed to the true spirit of the Christian religion ; that however honestly it may be accepted, it tends inevitably to lower the standard of what is right and good ; and lastly, that wherever the utilitarian system is carried, through the influence of popular writings, into practical effect, it will be found to end in results most pestilent to the honor and happiness of man.”†

---

## CHAPTER XII.



THE objection to the morality of the Catholic church, on the supposed ground of its incompatibility with the doctrine of a divine atonement, has played too great a part in history to be passed over in silence ; though otherwise as philosophers, men would have but little to say respecting it, philosophers not having to reason against phantoms ; but, as an historian of the middle ages, one cannot omit examining an objection which involves not merely a prodigious error, but also a flagrant misrepresentation of past times. If here again I should seem to enter far upon theological ground, the reader cannot, with reason, consider me as a trespasser, for the question of grace involves the whole history of the sixteenth century. If an historian can be only a geographer in some ages, in others he must be a theologian. It has been justly remarked by Michelet, that Robertson’s history is the most ob-

\* Schriften II. 333.

† Sedgwick’s Discourse on the Studies of the University, p. 80.



scure and unsatisfactory of all books, precisely because events are not presented in it from this elevated point of view ; for without investigating the theological question, it is impossible to understand the events of that time, whereas the great work on the variations by Bossuet, may be justly considered as being, perhaps, the very best history in the French language.

“ Domine, memorabor justitiæ tuæ solius.” You find in these words, reader, no contradiction to the line of argument hitherto pursued in this review of history ; for you are aware that in commemorating the deeds of just men during ages of faith, we have but recorded and magnified, as the language of those times proclaimed, the acts of God. “ Man has nothing but what he has received,” to use the words of Richard of St. Victor, “and he can do nothing unless by him from whom he received it. Some things, indeed, he can do by nature, and some by grace ; for the goods of nature are one thing, and those of grace are another. Nevertheless, it is certain that both are of grace, for nature itself is of grace : the first, therefore, are goods from grace preceding, and the second are goods from subsequent grace.”\* This was an early lesson given to men. “Nullus apud te per se innocens,” said Moses,† and the words of Job expressed a traditionary as well as a personal wisdom, when he said that no man is justified before God. “Nay, whoever compares himself to the Author of good,” says Pope St. Gregory the Great, in his morals, commenting upon Job’s words, “deprives himself of the good which he had received, for he who arrogates to himself the good which he hath received, fights against God with his own gifts ; therefore he who lifteth himself up is justly destroyed.”‡ That God of sovereign grace was pleased to impart his gifts to the redeemed race, and then to crown them, was indeed of faith, if so evident a truth could be so termed. “Qui creavit te sine te, non justificabit te sine te,” was the saying of St. Augustin. St. Paul said that he had fought the good fight, and that henceforth there was a crown laid up for him, which was a consummation sought by all who heard the church, the ground of whose hope is thus stated by Dante—

—“For do not doubt  
But to receive the grace which heaven vouchsafes  
Is meritorious, even as the soul  
With prompt affection welcometh the guest.”§

“Are there no merits of the just?” asks St. Augustin. “There are, certainly,” he replies, “because they are just ; but that they should become just there were no merits.”|| The religious innovators affirmed, that they had restored to men the knowledge of justification and atonement, but nothing could surpass the extravagance of such an assertion, though many of them certainly made it in sincerity ; —strange and wholly inexplicable delusion, which must be referred to some un-

\* Richardi S. Vict. de Statu Interioris Hominis. I. 20.

† Exod. xxxiv.

‡ S. Greg. Moral. Lib. IX. cap. 2. § Parad. XXIX || S. August. Epist. CV. ad Sixtum.

searchable counsels of Divine Providence! The whole history and philosophy of the Catholic church, proclaim that upon that doctrine the human race had been established uninterruptedly from the first dawn of the blessed light which had announced to sinners the mystery of their redemption. It will be better not to treat this subject with a view to the dogmatical errors of those who separated themselves—such works as Mohler's *Symbolik* are at every one's command—but merely to show the constant tenor of Catholic instruction respecting it; although an historian cannot be dispensed from briefly alluding to them, in order to show how heresy played the unwitting handmaid to those who entered through the breach of Christendom, to use the expression of Æschylus, with an atheist foot: ἀθέῳ ποδὶ,\* beholding in dismay the fearful desolation, though still obstinate in its alliance. The change was full of terror for all, but rebellious men preferred it to a palinode.

"Lord, doctor," said Luther's wife, on one occasion, "how comes it that under the papacy men used to pray so fervently and long, whereas now they pray so seldom and with such coldness?" "Doubtless," replied her husband, "the demon prompted them to practice religion, in order that they might trust in their works." Burton, after describing the hardheartedness of his contemporaries, and their insensibility to the sufferings of the poor, proceeds thus: "Tell the rich man that the poor are starving, remind him that they are his brethren; he passes on his way: if thou canst thunder upon him as papists do with satisfactory and meritorious works, or persuade him by these means he shall save his soul out of hell, and free it from purgatory, then, in all likelihood, he will listen and stay."† Nothing could restrain their reckless deduction of consequences from the doctrine of their teachers. "In this age," says Fuller, "we begin to think meanly of the Lord's Prayer. Some will not forgive it for that passage 'as we forgive them that trespass against us.'" The insane opinions, the truly factious opposition, to use a modern phrase of these men, introduced, it is true, infinite disorder into the social state, which our ancestors had abundant reason to deplore for their own sakes, for their country's peace, and for the cause of God's honor; but though Luther and his peers had the presumption to deny the merit of good works, which error formed the fatal breach, the deposit of faith was too securely guarded to admit of Catholics, "on that account, flying to the opposite extreme, so as to refrain from relying for salvation on the merits of Christ, as all just men had done before them."‡ The theological question, purely such, was indeed for ever set at rest by the celebrated canon of the council of Trent on justification, as it had been dogmatically determined long before by the successive decrees promulgated in different ages, which may be seen in the collection made by Ives de Chartres.§ To determine it, however, in relation to history, which is the point

\* *Eumenid.* 540.

† *Book III.*

‡ *Principles of the Christian Religion*, by the Rev. Lewis Brittain, regent of the English college at Bornhem.

§ *Ivonis Carnotens. Decret. Pars XVII.*

that concerns us, let us hear the great voice of Catholic tradition, transmitted through the writings of the fathers, of the scholastic and mystic authors of the middle ages, and through the liturgy and offices of the church. Who could estimate the depths of the mysteries of faith! They taught that there are spirits and intelligences for ever lost, and left without redemption: that there are others of human kind, to whom not only redemption is possible, but even a degree of glory promised beyond what they would have enjoyed if they had never fallen. The Master of the Sentences supposes that as Satan had sinned without any temptation or seducer from without, therefore his sin was irremediable; but that, as the sin of man was, as it were, occasioned by another, so by another he hath a remedy.\* Of this whole subject it was deemed enough to say, in the words of St. Augustin, respecting original sin, than this "nihil est ad prædicandum notius, nihil ad intelligendum secretius."†

"From the beginning of the world," says Hugo of St. Victor, "there were Christians, if not in name, in fact. There are three kinds of men—men of the natural law, men of the written law, and men of grace. From the beginning till the end of the world, there will never have been any one justified unless by grace, and grace will never have been gained unless by Christ."‡

You have heard the theologian, now hear the poet of the middle ages; he speaks of paradise and says,

"None ever hath ascended to this realm,  
Who hath not a believer been in Christ,  
Either before or after the blest limbs  
Were nailed upon the wood. But lo! of those  
Who call Christ, Christ, there shall be many found  
In judgment farther off from him by far  
Than such to whom his name was never known."§

All this is expressed in sublime brevity by the author of the *Quadriregio*, describing Christ's descent into Limbo, when he says,

———"As down the cavern streamed  
The radiance: "Light," said Adam, "this, that breathed  
First on me, thou art come, expected Lord!"

Let us, finally, hear the preacher of the fifth age, whom some suppose to be St. Cæsarius, announcing the same doctrine on Easter Sunday. "Behold, you have heard what our defender the Lord of vengeance hath done of his own accord. When like a conqueror, brilliant and terrible, he entered the regions of the kingdom of darkness, at his sight, the impious legions of hell, terrified and trembling, began to inquire of each other, saying, 'Who is this fearful comer, resplendent with the whiteness of snow? Our Tartarus hath never beheld his fellow. The

\* Lib. II. Distinct. 21.

† De Moribus Eccles. Cath. cap. 22.

‡ Hugo de St. Vict. de Sacramentis, Lib. I. Pars. VII.

§ Parad. XIX.



world hath never vomited into our cavern any one like him. It is an invader, not a debtor. He requires, he demands not; we behold a judge, not a suppliant. He cometh to order, not to obey; to plunder, not to remain. Did our warders sleep, when this conqueror attacked our gates? If he were a sinner, he would not be so powerful; if any impurity attached to him, he would not lighten our hell with such a lustre. If he be God, wherefore is he come? If man, how did he dare to come? If God, what doth he in the grave? If man, why doth he deliver sinners? Whence comes he, so bright, so strong, so wondrous, so terrible? Who is he to have passed our frontiers with such intrepidity, and not only to fear not our punishment, but to deliver others from our chains? May it not be him of whom our prince hath lately said, that by his death we should receive the empire of the world! But if it be him, the hope of our prince has been frustrated; where he thought to conquer he hath been conquered and overthrown. O, our prince! what hast thou done, what hast thou wished to do? Behold him, who with a light supreme hath dissipated thy darkness! burst thy dungeons, broken thy chains, delivered thy captives, and changed their mourning into joy! See how those who were accustomed to groan beneath our torments, now insult us on account of the salvation which they have received; and not only no longer fear us, but threaten us! Who hath ever before seen the dead triumphing and the captives filled with joy?"

"Fundamentum est justitiæ fides," says St. Ambrose;\* and St. Augustin expresses the doctrine of the church thus, "Christ was made sin that we might become justice, not having our own justice but that which comes from God, not in ourselves but in Christ."† As it was, however, chiefly against the doctrine and practice of the middle ages that the objection was directed, let us pass on at once, without multiplying sentences from the holy fathers, to the testimony of a later time. Hear, then, an ascetic author of universal renown, during the ages so vehemently accused. "Domine Deus meus," cries Thomas à Kempis, "in misericordia tua stant omnia opera mea: et nulla sunt propria merita, nisi adsit tua pietas et miseratio immensa. Et hæc est spes mea, et tota fiducia mea."‡ Again, hear Lewis of Granada, the celebrated Spanish Dominican. "The merit of the blessed John the Evangelist," saith he, "was certainly great and eminent; but in the greatest gifts of God, it is safest to refer all things to his immense grace, from which every benefit flows."§

"You should understand," he says, in his discourse, on the invention of the holy cross, "that all the gifts of grace, and all the unction of the Holy Spirit, are conferred upon us for the sake and merits of our crucified Lord. He vouchsafes us the grace by which we rise from sin; therefore, if we rise from sin, we rise by his merits. If we retain justice unto the end, we retain it by his merits. If we

\* Lib. Off. I. c. 23.

† Enchiridion, c. 13.

‡ Thom. à Kemp. Soliloquium, cap. 7.

§ Ludovic. Grenatens. In Festo B. Joan. Evang. Concio III.

overcome the temptations of the ancient enemy, we overcome by his merits. If we perform any good work, we perform it by his merits. If we are kindled by a pious desire, we are kindled by his merits. If we are not shaken by any thunder of adverse things, nor puffed up by prosperity, it is owing to his merits. This Cross made the apostles conquerors of the world, strengthened the martyrs in their trials, instructed confessors with celestial precepts, illuminated doctors, constituted the purity of virgins, filled the desert with choirs of monks, and renewed the perishing world. This was the wisdom of the little ones, the light of those that sat in darkness, the strength of the combatants, and the crown of those that conquered.”\*

Hear now Lewis of Blois. “Let every one, when about to die, trust in the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ rather than in his own. Let him confide in His goodness, and in the prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary, and in the saints and elect of God. Let him propose to himself the bitter passion and death of Christ. Let him call to memory that ineffable charity which compelled him to sustain such unworthy things. Let him lose and submerge himself, with all his sins and negligences, in the profound sea of his immense mercy; and from pure love, with a perfect resignation, offer himself to the glory of God as a living host to the Lord.”†

That all hope of salvation was to be placed in the merits of Christ, is shown in his canon of the spiritual life. ‡ “All our works and exercises,” he says in another work, “must be offered to God, by his only son, to the eternal praise of his name; for things which are of themselves obscure or less bright, acquire an ineffable splendor and beauty from the merits of Christ, with which they are joined and united.”§

St. Catherine of Sienna shows that no human works can either satisfy for sin or deserve reward, without the affection of charity, and the application of the blood of Christ. “Knowest thou not, O daughter, that all the pains which the soul can sustain in this life, are not sufficient to punish the least fault, since an offence against the infinite good, requires an infinite satisfaction; and, therefore, not all the sufferings in this world are satisfactory, but corrective. Nevertheless, true contrition is satisfactory, by means not of the suffering but of the infinite desire; and, therefore, the works of penance, though finite and done in time may have an infinite merit, where the virtue was performed with infinite desire, and the penalty endured with true contrition.”|| This most holy contemplatist ascribes the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the soul, to its having been previously washed in his precious blood.”¶

Henry Suso says, “Others may console themselves in the innocence of their lives, or in their great exercises and labors, but I have all my hope and conso-

\* Ludovic. Grenatens. In Inventione Crucis. Concio I. † Ludovic. Blois. Consol. Pusillan.

‡ Cap. 37.

§ Ludovic. Blois. Enchirid. Parvulorum, Lib. I. Doc. III. ap. 9.

|| S. Cath. Senensis Dialog. Tract. I. cap. 3.

¶ Id. cap. 4.

lation placed and laid up in the passion of Jesus Christ, in his satisfaction, and expiation, and merits.”\* John Lanspergius, the Carthusian, leaves us to infer that this doctrine was universally accepted, for he begins with “Since one drop of the blood of Christ has more value and satisfaction than all human merits.”†

“It is with a perpetual thirst,” says St. Bernardine of Sienna, “that we must do justice, which implies that we are never sufficiently just. The just man never says it is enough, but always esteems himself an unprofitable servant. The prophet saith, ‘Sperantem in Domino misericordia circumdabit;’ he does not say, hoping in his merits but hoping in the Lord.”‡

“How happy,” cries father John de Avila, the celebrated Spanish preacher, “is the man who founds his all upon Jesus Christ, living to him and for him.”§ “Remember,” he says, writing to a certain nobleman, “that the confidence and consolation of Christians who wish to be saved, must not be founded on their own strength or on their own works only, but on the grace which is given to us in the works and merits of Jesus Christ; who by his infinite goodness, has willed to communicate them to all who by faith and penitence are subject to him; and this it is which alone can give us assurance and peace.”|| “The Son of God,” says Dom Calmet, “is the surety and the mediator of all the alliances between God and men. They are only made in view and in virtue of the great and divine alliance which he has made with our nature in his incarnation.”¶

The testimony of the more ancient writers is no less express and concurrent. “It is by Jesus Christ,” says the Angel of the School, “that heavenly gifts and graces come to us from God: it is by Jesus Christ, that we should render him our thanksgiving, in order that he may be in all things and by all things mediator between God and man.” The writings of St. Bernard and of Pope Innocent the Second addressed to Abailard, are equally explicit, reminding men, as the author of the Imitation of Christ says, that they should never think themselves to be of any merit on account of good works.\*\* “What ought a Christian to study and to know, unless that in which consists all his good, all his treasure, and all his riches? What is this treasure of man, unless his merit? ‘Ergo, postquam in morte Christi est omne meritum hominis, sequitur quod totus thesaurus hominis est morte Christi. Qui vult ergo in se habere omnem virtutem et omne meritum et omne bonum, recipiat in se Christi mortem et passionem, et portet eam in se, et incorporet eam sibi.’” These are the words of Raimund de Sabundus in his Natural Theology, cited by Cardinal Bona, as containing the proper subject of daily meditation at the office of Nones.††

“I live in the faith of the Son of God, ‘qui dilexit me et tradidit semet ipsum pro me’ are the words of the apostle, from which an ancient ascetic concludes that every man should regard the cross of Jesus, as if there had been no one else in the

\* Ludovic. Bios. Consolat. Pusil. † Id. ‡ S. Ber. Senens. Tom. III. de Beat.

§ Epist. Part II. 13. || Id. II. Epist. 52. ¶ Calmet sur le v. 13 du Chap. IX. de la Genèse.

\*\* De Imit. Lib. III. c. 4.

†† De Divin. Psal. cxcvii.



world but himself who had sinned, and that he had died for him alone.\* “It is on the death of Jesus Christ that all my hopes are founded,” says the unknown writer of the middle ages, who composed the manual ascribed to St. Augustin. “The death of Jesus Christ is my refuge and the source of my merits.”† Speaking of the perfection of the graces of Christ, St. Bonaventura says, “This fulness of grace as from the head flows down into all who approach to him by a right faith, or by the sacraments of faith, whether they preceded his advent or followed after it : Christ having in himself the superabundance of grace, bestows the benefit of this grace upon those who come to him.”‡ “The mystery of our justification,” he says elsewhere, “is signified in the work of the fourth day of the Creation, in which God made the sun and the moon, and the stars ; for in the work of justification, we see the stars of virtue shining in the heart of the justified, which derive their light from the sun of justice.”§ “Have this for a general rule,” he says, “whenever you wish to render God propitious to you, carry in your heart the wounds of Christ, and present yourself to the Eternal Father as if sprinkled with the blood of his only Son, and he will have mercy on you.”|| Mark now how this doctrine was carried into practical effect. St. John of the Cross was a celestial man, who appeared on the earth like an incarnate seraphim ; he performed actions of a perfect disinterestedness, and of an almost consummate holiness. Nevertheless he refused to recognize one action of his life which did not give him cause for fear.¶ When dying, in the convent of Ubede, the father provincial, seeking to console him by reminding him of his great services to religion, the holy man replied, “I pray your reverence to speak of nothing but my sins, for I recall them now to mind, and I know that I have nothing to offer for their satisfaction but the merits of Jesus Christ.”\*\*

To cut short this present debate, the objectors can be securely challenged to produce the life of one saint of the Catholic Church, of whom it is not even expressly recorded, when any details are to be expected, as it is of the venerable mother De Chantal, foundress of the order of the Visitation, that all their hope was founded upon the infinite mercy of God, and on the merits of Jesus Christ.†† Justinian Bergomao was a holy hermit of Camaldoli, who from the desert wrote against Martin Luther. So dear to him were the lives of the fathers, that he used to express his wish that the volume which contained them might be buried with him in his grave. When dying, he was exhorted, by some who stood near, to take courage, to whom he answered, “Fathers, though not trusting in my own merits, but in the mercy of the Most High, be assured that I expect death as a virgin awaits her spouse.”‡‡ But even if we were left in ignorance of what these men believed and

\* P. Joan. à Jesu. Maria, Instruct. Novitiorum, III. cap. 2.

† Manuel, cap. 22.

‡ S. Bonavent. Centilo qui Pars III. § 28.

§ De Reformat. Hom. Exter. cap. 64.

|| S. Bonavent. Stim. Div. Amor. Pars. III. 12.

¶ Dosithée, Vie de S. Jean. de la Croix, Liv. VI.

\*\* Id. Liv. VIII.

†† Marsollier, Vie de Madame de Chantal, Lib. II. p. 220. 354.

‡‡ Annales Camaldulens. Lib. LXXIII.

performed, if we knew nothing of their lives or of their deaths, still no other conclusion is possible as to the historical fact, after we have heard the prayers of the church and observed the principle of all her mysteries. In the treatise on the mass by Cardinal Bona, you will see how the mind of the priest is wholly bent upon the desire of being immersed in the abyss of the merits of Christ.\* Those who assisted at the Eucharistic sacrifice, and those who offered it up to the Eternal Father, knew from the Church that, as Cardinal Bona says, no disposition of theirs, no industry, no virtue, but alone the grace of God, rendered them worthy.† “The church knows,” says Pope Benedict the Fourteenth, in his treatise *De Sacrificio Missæ*,‡ explaining the words of the daily prayer, “non meritorum inspector, sed veniæ largitor,” that God vouchsafes beatitude only through interceding merits, and that grace and pardon of sins are necessary for all who are admitted into the company of the saints, which without our meriting, are given only by Christ our Lord, our own merits being nothing but the gift of God’s mercy and grace.” If the church invites her children to perform the works of penance, it is her prayer that “as they depend solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended by heavenly protection.”§ If she commemorates their having received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, it is her prayer that “God would mercifully accomplish what he has granted to them, without any merit on their side.”|| If she hails the coming of the Just One, she beseeches God to be appeased by the prayers and victims of their humility, and since they have no merits to plead, to assist them by his protection through their Lord Jesus Christ.¶ At the end of every prayer she adds, that it is offered through Christ.¶ “Non enim,” as Durandus saith, explaining this usage, “per aliam viam ad nos æterna Dei beneficia possunt decurrere, quam per eum qui est Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus.”\*\*

In the very offices which are accused of militating against this tradition of faith, she finds occasion to express how deeply it has influenced her views of the divine law; for if she wishes men to believe according to the judgment of the subtle Scot, who deserved and obtained that title for his profound argument on that very question, that the soul of the Blessed Virgin, at the first instant of its creation and infusion into her body, was preserved from the stain of original sin, her doctors teach that this was through the special grace and privilege of God, by the intuition of the merits of Jesus Christ.†† Finally, in commemorating the passion of the holy martyrs, she holds that their intercession and merits can only avail through the mystery of Christ’s atonement, as may be witnessed in what she sings on the festival of St. Clement, Pope, and martyr.—Non meis meritis ad vos me misit Dominus, vestris coronis participem fieri. The religious institutions also of the middle ages not only implied the acceptance of this doctrine, but were

\*De Missa Tractat. Ascet. c. V. 7.

§ Coll. Sabbat. II. Hebd. Lent.

¶ Secret. Second Sund. in Advent.

†† Sardagna Theologia, tom. IV. 64.

† De Missa Tractat. cap. 2. 3. ‡ I. 301.

|| Secret. Twenty-third Sund. after Pentecost.

\*\* Durandi Rationale, cap. 15. Lib. IV.

wholly and expressly dependent on it. The life of monks could have had no beginning if the sacrifice on Calvary had not been consummated. "Whoever aspires to the monastic life," says Albert the Great, "must, as if with closed eyes and senses, refrain from entangling and disturbing himself with any creature; he must retire wholly unto himself, and regard no other object but only Jesus Christ wounded."\* To the testimony of holy theologians, thus borne out by the language of the church, and the object of her institutions, the evidence of history, however, is not confined. It shows further, how the sense of the people, and the belief of the laity, corresponded with the doctrine, which had been divinely transmitted to them. Lo! what is this goodly train which passes before us? Who is this that rides in such state, armed, though in times of peace, in complete steel, having at his saddle bow a helmet, and over his mail a coat, presenting before and behind a great cross, on which is written, O how merciful is God! followed by a stately company, all of whom bear crosses similarly embroidered? This is the just and wise Emperor Sigismond, whose zeal for the peace of the church has prompted him to enter France. You perceive how this divine mystery is brought to your recollection, even amidst the pomp of secular triumphs.

In the instructions which were particularly addressed to the laity, we invariably find the utmost attention evinced to impress it upon them. Thus Iona lays down the fundamental principle of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ at the beginning of his work, *De Institutione Laicali*, which was dedicated to the count Malfredus, who was one of the first nobles of Gaul under the emperor Charles the Bald.†

Among St. Anselm's questions to be proposed to a dying man we read as follows. If it be a layman the question is, "Do you hope and believe that you may come to eternal salvation, not by your merits, but by the merits of the passion of Jesus Christ?"—Answer, Such is my hope. If it be a monk, you are to ask him, "*Credis quod Dominus Jesus Christus pro te mortuus est? Credo. Credis te non posse nisi per mortem ipsius salvari? Credo. Age ergo dum superest in te anima: in hac sola morte totam fiduciam tuam constitue: in nulla alia tu fiduciam habeas: huic morti te totum committe, hac solâ te totum contege: hac morte te totum involve: et si Dominus Deus voluerit te judicare, dic: Domine, mortem Domini nostri Jesu Christi objicio inter me et judicium tuum; aliter non contendo tecum.*" Thus speaks the father of the scholastic theology. Again, to history belongs the evidence which can be collected from such ancient documents as the testament of Margaret of Lorraine, wife of René, duke of Alençon. In this, after declaring that she recommends her soul to God her Creator and Redeemer, and to his blessed mother, to St. Michael, and to all the Saints of Paradise, she adds, "in order that by the very merit of the dolorous passion of my Creator, and the

\* Albert. Mag. de adhærendo Deo, cap. 2. † Paravin, Hist. de Lyon. Lib. II. 92.

‡ Ionæ Aurelianens. Episcop. de Instit. Laicali, Lib. I. cap. 1.

§ S. Anselmi Admonitio Morienti.



prayers of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the blessed saints, I may live and die in the holy Catholic faith, and in the love and charity of God, my Saviour and Redeemer Jesus; in whom is my whole and final hope, and on whom depends the beginning and the end of all regular observance." \* Similar evidence does history supply in recording the last words of king John of Arragon, in the year 1479. "He gazed upon the crucifix and said, 'O Creator of the world, omnipotent God, redeemer of men, spare me, thy most unworthy servant. Mercy, O most clement Jesus, and turn away thy face from my sins, moved not by my merits, which, O Lord, are none, but by thy ineffable piety and infinite mercy.' "†

The celebrated countess Mathilda expired with similar words.

"In cruce nam Christi sua figens oscula dixit :  
Te colui semper, mea nunc rogo crimina terge.  
Accipiens Christi Corpus venerabile dixit :  
Semper dum vixi Deus, hoc scis, spem tibi fixi ;  
Nunc in fine meo me salvans suscipe, quæso."

Such was her confession ; while the words of Donizo, her chaplain, after relating it, show how far were the wise and holy men of those days from expressing that presumptuous confidence which is now on every tongue when it is a question of a soul departing ; for he adds,

"Sic orans migrat mox hæc sapiens Comitissa:  
Quamquam credamus, Deus huic quoque sit miseratus.  
Ipsam nemo tamen scit, qui non postulet alte  
Ut sibi concedat Paradisi gaudia vera."‡

Reader, I am well pleased to have reserved for this place the letter of Angelo Politian to James Antiquarius, in which he relates the death of Lorenzo de Medicis ; for though we reviewed in a former book the character of death in relation to blessed sorrow, the last words and actions of that great man were so imbued with the spirit of this divine doctrine, that the claim of the present argument to possess their evidence seems to outweigh every other. " Finding the moments critical, Lorenzo," saith he, " as a man always most cautious, had, as you may suppose, nothing more at heart than to send for the physician of souls, to whom he confessed, according to the Christian rite, all the faults of his life. I heard a person who was present say, that he never beheld any thing more incredible than the constancy of the man at his death, than the imperturbable serenity with which he called to mind the past, dispensed the present, and provided for the future. About midnight he was told that the priest was coming with the sacrament. 'Far be it from me,' he cried, 'far be it from me to suffer that my Jesus, who made me and redeemed me, should enter this bed-chamber. Raise me up, I implore you, raise me up, that I may be carried forth to meet my Lord ;' and so raising

\* Dacher. Spicilegium, Tom. V. † Lucii. Marinei Siculi de Rebus Hispaniæ, Lib. XVIII.  
‡ Vita Mathild. Lib. II.

himself up as well as he could, and sustaining the weakness of his body, by the force of his mind, between the arms of his servants he was borne into the hall, where sinking down on his knees and weeping, he spoke these words : 'Dost thou deign, O mild Jesus, to visit this thy most wicked servant : what do I say, servant ? Nay, rather thy enemy, and indeed thy most ungrateful enemy, who hast so often offended thy majesty, notwithstanding so many benefits conferred upon him. O by that charity with which thou dost embrace the whole race of men, through which thou didst come down on earth, taking upon thyself our humanity ; by that charity which compelled thee to suffer hunger and thirst, and cold, and heat, and labor, and scourgings, and contumely, and stripes and blows, and lastly, death and the cross ; by that charity, I implore thee, O Jesus, to turn away thy face from my sins, that when I shall stand before thy tribunal, to which I now feel myself cited, not my sins, but the merits of thy cross may be recompensed. O may thy most precious blood, good Jesus, prevail in my cause, which thou didst shed to restore men to liberty upon that altar of our redemption.' After these words, which he pronounced weeping, while all that were present wept, the priest ordered him to be raised and placed upon his bed, that he might administer to him more conveniently, which he for a while refused to suffer, but in the end, rather than appear disobedient to his senior, he permitted it to be done, and then after similar words, he received the body and blood of the Lord. After a while he began to console his son Peter, who alone continued present, and gave him, as I heard, sage advice, and all that he said was full of singular wisdom and holiness. When I entered the room, he stretched out his feeble arms saying, 'Ah, my Angelo ;' then he caught and pressed closely both my hands. I endeavored at first, turning my head aside, to conceal my tears and sobs, but finding it impossible, I threw myself into a recess of the chamber and gave the reins to my sorrow. I soon, however, resumed strength and returned, when he asked where was John Picus of Mirandula ? and I replied, that he had remained in the city fearing lest his presence should be troublesome ; 'and,' said he, 'I ought to fear lest it might trouble him to come so far, and yet I would fain see and speak with him before I die.' So I sent messengers, and he came immediately. O good God, with what humanity, with what blandishments did he receive him ! He asked his pardon for having sent for him, and told him that he did so through love, for that with his face, as with that of a most dear friend, he desired to satiate his dying eyes. Then for some time, he conversed familiarly, and even playfully, with us, saying that he wished he could have finished his library. When Jerome, the holy friar and preacher of celestial doctrine, entered and exhorted him to hold the faith, he replied, that he held it entire. As he was leaving the room, Lorenzo said, 'Stay, father, your benediction first ;' and then with head bowed down, and a countenance full of religion, he received it. He repeated the responses with such composure, that you would suppose it was the others, and not Lorenzo, who approached death. Such evenness of mind did he evince to the last, that when

some one offering food, asked him how he liked it, ‘as a dying man,’ was his reply. Finally, embracing all with affection, and asking pardon of each if he had ever spoken a harsh word to him during the pain of his sickness, he desired them to recite the prayers for the recommendation of a soul. At the Gospel relating the passion of Christ he repeated the words, at one time silently moving his lips, and at another raising up his weak eyes, and sometimes making signs with his fingers to express what he felt. At last the silver crucifix, magnificently adorned with gems and pearls, being placed before his eyes, looking on it and kissing it, he expired; a man born to the highest state, and who amidst the gusts and tides of fluctuating fortune, showed himself so moderate that it would be difficult to say, whether in prosperity he appeared more just, or in adversity more magnanimous. Of intelligence so acute and profound that he seemed to excel equally in all things, and of virtue so eminent that probity, justice, and faith, seem in the estimation of all men, to have chosen his breast for their dwelling-place and for their temple.”\*

Here is an admirable narrative, reader, but it only supplies an instance of the effects of the Catholic doctrine of justification, and we may recollect that all the examples of holy death in the middle ages, recorded in a former book were similar. If we pass to the writings of the learned men who were most distinguished for their admiration of the ancient philosophy, we find this doctrine laid down with the utmost precision, as in the book of Marsilius Ficinus de Christiana Religione.† Nor is it unknown in the regions where the muses soar, for the Catholic poets took care that it should be proclaimed in solemn verse. Dante expressly introduces it into the seventh canto of his Paradise, where with theological accuracy it is stated and explained. “Man in himself, had ever lacked the means of satisfaction. Such is the lesson taught to him in the blissful seats, where are none who place obtained for merit of their own; and man had vainly tried out of his own sufficiency to pay the rigid debt; for justice every method else were all too scant, had not the Son of God humbled himself to put on mortal flesh.”‡ Tasso in like manner alludes to it where he represents the hermit conversing with Rinaldo.

“ ‘My Lord,’ he said, ‘your travels wondrous are.  
Far have you strayed, erred, wander’d far :  
Much are you bound to God, above, who brought  
You safe from false Armida’s charmed hold ;  
Yet may’st thou not, polluted thus with sin,  
In his high service war or fight begin :  
The world, the flesh, with their infections vile  
Pollute thy thoughts impure, thy spirit stain :  
Not Po, not Ganges, not seven-mouthed Nile,  
Not the wide seas can wash thee clean again  
Only to purge all faults which thee defile,  
His blood hath power who for thy sins was slain.’ ”

\* Angelo Politian, Epist. Lib. IV. † Cap. 20. ‡ Parad. VII. and XXXII. § XVIII. 7.



In fine, even the material monuments of the middle ages would be sufficient to prove that the whole world had been imbued with the spirit of this divine doctrine of mercy-tempered justice which Rufinus supposes to have been known to the Egyptian priests and philosophers, who, in their hieroglyphics, by the figure of a cross expressed, he says, the hope of future salvation. Churches, palaces, thrones, sceptres, banners, panoplies, trophies, tombs, all would be unintelligible without this key. At the mention of tombs, reader, methinks I see you beckon to me as one who would say, here let us pause a while. It is true the ancient sepulchres, with their inscriptions and emblems, are most worthy of being examined if it were only from a consideration of the direct evidence which they furnish to the belief of men: well then let us examine a few, and confirm our annals by this testimony from the dead. The tombs of the unjust proclaim that the hope of their tenants was in their own virtue. The heretics of the middle ages, generally took care that posterity should be made acquainted with their merits. The emperor Frederick the Second, buried at Monte Reale, near Palermo was commemorated on his tomb by his natural son, Manfred, in these terms:

“ Si probitas, sensus, virtutis gratia, intellectus.  
Nobilitas oris possent resistere morti,  
Non foret extinctus Fredericus qui manet intus.”\*

No such style of fond sepulchral flattery is traced in Catholic epitaphs. Examine, for example, the marble tomb of Junius Bassus, which was found in the Vatican cemetery under the confessional of St. Peter in the year 1595, when the time-worn pavement was disturbed. On this is exquisitely carved many histories of the ancient and the new testament which all have relation to the redemption of man by the blood of Christ. The sacrifice of Abraham, the brazen serpent, and the scape-goat, appear on many of the ancient sarcophaguses, found in the different cemeteries, which may be seen represented in any of the works which treat on subterraneous Rome. No one need be told what symbols are found in the cathedrals and other churches of the middle age. The brazen effigy of Heribert, archbishop of Milan, in the eleventh century, on his tomb which is in the church of St. Dionysius in that city, is placed at the foot of an image of the Saviour's cross. The epitaph ends with these lines:

“Nunc tuūmūlor servus servorum, Christe, tuorum:  
Pro meritis horum, tibi digne complacitorum  
Sanguine, quæso, tuo, mihi tu miserere redempto.”

The old inscription on the tomb of Adelhard, founder of the cathedral of Ferrara, ended thus,—

“ Per meritum Christi requiem deposcimus isti.†”

Mark the ancient epitaph on the tomb of Raban Maur, in the monastery of

\* Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 107.

† Id. tom. I. 516.

St. Alban, in the chapel of St. Boniface at Mayence, in which his body was laid to rest after ruling the abbey of Fulda during twenty years, and the see of Mayence nine.

“Nunc ego te ex tumulo, frater dilecte, juvando  
Commendes Christo me ut precibus Domino,  
Judicis æterni me ut gratia salvet in ævum,  
No meritum aspiciens, sed pietatis opus.  
Hraben nempe mihi nomen, cui lectio dulcis  
Divinæ legis semper ubique fuit.  
Cui Deus omnipotens tribuat cœlestia regna  
Et veram requiem semper in arce Poli.”\*

Read now the epitaph on the tomb of Ratbod Frisius, a celebrated philosopher of the ninth century, and archbishop of Utrecht, composed by himself.

“Esuries te, Christe Deus, sitis atque videndi  
Jam modo carnales me vetat esse dapes.  
Da mihi te vesci, te potum haurire salutis,  
Unicus ignotæ tu cibus esto viæ.  
Et quem longa fames errantem ambesit in orbe,  
Hunc satia vultu, Patris imago, tuo.

O Deus omnipotens, cujus pietate redemptus  
Subsistit mundus, qua generatus homo,  
Respice me miserum peccati mole gravatum  
Et nimio pressum pondere, Christe, leva.  
Ereptumque gregis dira de sorte ministri,  
Judicis inter oves tempore siste tuas.”†

Lastly, hear how the legist of Bologna, in the time of Frederick the First is commemorated.

“Transiit ut vivat mundanæ legis alumnus ;  
Mors sit ei requies, ultima vita Deus.  
Urbis honor, mundi speculum, jacet his Ugolinus :  
Christus qui novit parcere, parcat ei.”

But not merely tombs, all the material monuments of the middle ages bore witness to the universality of this faith, for no place was left without this symbol ; and the cross would never have been the object most familiar to all eyes, exhibited continually under every possible variety of associations, if there had not been a knowledge of the doctrine which it signified. “He who places his trust in the mystery of the cross,” says St. Basil, “may truly be said to have found the cross of our Lord with holy Helena ;” “for,” adds Louis of Grenada, “this is spiritually to find the cross of our Lord. For it would have been of no avail to find the wood of the cross unless we found also the mystery and philosophy of the cross, which consists in this hope and in this love.”‡ Look back now through the tide

\* *Historia Fuldensis*, Pars III.

† *Bulæus*, *Histor. Universit. Parisiens.* Tom. I.

‡ *Ludov. Granat. in Inventione. S. Crucis Concio* III.

of times, and hear Raban Maur teaching in verse and prose the theology of the holy cross.

O crux, quæ summi es voto dedicata trophæo !  
 O crux, quæ Christi es claro benedicta triumpho !  
 Te Patriarcharum laudabilis actio signat,  
 Plebsque prophetarum divino flamine jussa,  
 Agmen Apostolicum pandit tua rite trophæa,  
 Martyrum et ipse chorus effuso jure cruore  
 En arx alma crucis, en fabrica facta salutis,  
 En thorax hic regis, hæc conciliatio mundi.  
 Signa crucis Christi Seraphim coelestia monstrant,  
 Distentisque alis brachia tensa notant.  
 Crux sacra, tu æterni es Regis victoria Christi,  
 Est orbi toti Domini quoque passio vita.  
 In cruce lex Domini decoratur luce corusca,  
 Gentes et linguæ sociantur laude sacrata,  
 Crux æterna Dei laus, vivis in arce polorum.  
 Crux, superis placita es. Crux, hinc es navita mundo,  
 Rabanum memet clemens rogo Christe tuere,  
 O pie iudice."

"The passion of the cross," he continues, "sustains the heavens, rules the world, penetrates hell. By that the angels are confirmed, the people redeemed, the enemies overthrown : this the Author of all provided and constructed that in it he might restore all things and reunite all things by Jesus Christ our Lord. O truly good and holy cross of Christ, who can rightly tell of thee or worthily recount thy praise ! Thou art the pious discloser of celestial secrets, the sacred guardian of the mysteries of God, the fit dispenser of the sacraments of the church. On thee the angels gaze, accumulating their joys : from thee men learn the right of their salvation ; in thee the inhabitants of hell perceive the just retribution of their fraud. Thou dost renew the past, illuminate the present, foreshow the future ; thou dost seek what was lost, preserve what is found, restore the fallen, and direct them in the way of peace : thou art the victory of the eternal king, the joy of the celestial hosts, the strength of the inhabitants of earth ; thou art the remission of sins, and the way of the just ; thou art the remedy of the sick, the help of the laborers, the refreshment of the weary ; thou art the state of those that believe well, the security of those that work well, the habit of those that persevere well ; and whatever worthily can be thought of the redemption of the world, whatever praise can be uttered by the tongues of men and angels, is properly applied to thy honor ; for whatever is praised in thee is ascribed to Christ crucified. To thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, I offer humble prayers, that thou wouldst deign to inspire me, a sinner, so that I may sing the honor of thy holy cross, and preach to my fellow-servants the truth of our common salvation. Nor doth the consciousness of my own sins refrain me from this undertaking, but rather it giveth me confidence, because in this song I celebrate how thou hast destroyed the kingdom of sin, and granted pardon to the whole world. Hail, venerable



cross of God, thou art the wisdom and light of the orb of worlds ! How much more worthy of being styled a throne imperial than an instrument of servile torture, since our Emperor and King by thee acquired all power in heaven and on earth, overcame his enemies and redeemed a world ! ” This is from the wondrous book on the theology of the cross, which Raban Maur sent to the emperor Lewis and to the Palatines. And what words can more clearly express that hunger of grace which Bernardine of Sienna shows to be an element in that which seeks justice, and which, according to the promise of Christ, was to be filled ? To remain any longer, therefore, on this subject, would be an unnecessary delay. Perhaps I have already passed beyond the stretch of indulgence. If historical truth could have been otherwise defended, it would certainly have been better to have at once turned away from these stale objections, and imitated the royal disposition of the lion, which preys on nothing that seems dead.

You can now, I trust, reader, form some judgment of the ages of faith in regard to the hunger and thirst after that true and highest beauty which, as St. Augustin saith, is justice.\* You have heard in part the testimony of history respecting those throughout the earth who believed in Christ, separated from the vices of the world, and from the darkness of sinners, restored to grace, and associated with sanctity. Such was the last age, whose coming the noble Mantuan proclaimed on the authority of a mystic, and to him, doubtless, unintelligible song ; thus arose and revolved that great order of ages recalling the Saturnian kingdoms, beholding a renovated world, justice returned, times of primeval innocence restored, and a new race descended from above. For who must not be agreed with the Christian platonist of Florence,† in believing that these predictions referred to the purgation of minds, and to the doctrines and justice of Christ which were to abolish the vestiges of the ancient fraud ; that by the offspring of this kind which was to behold heroes mixed with gods, and to be seen by them, and which was to govern the universal world, was implied not the posterity of a Pollio, a private citizen to whose infant son so prudent and modest a poet as the great sovereign of the pastoral song, would never have applied such a hyberbole, but the generation of those that sought through his eternal son the God of Jacob, who were to have angels ministers, and a legislator over them constituted by God, that the nations might know that they were men—words strictly fulfilled when the whole world, as the church declares, experienced and beheld the fallen raised, what was old renewed, and all things in part restored to their pristine form, by him from whom they took their beginning. Such was the generation of the meek when directed by him in judgment, and taught his ways, when their humility and labor were seen by him and all their sins remitted. Such, in fine, was the Catholic society during ages of faith, militant, not triumphant, in communion with God suffering on earth, afflicted, therefore, in great labors, in perils amidst

\*Tractat. in Ps. li.

† Marsil. Ficini. De Christiana. Religione, cap. 24

false brethren, infirm on beholding infirmity, burning at the scandal daily witnessed, having to endure many things, to deplore many things, but notwithstanding all disorders, and all the vicissitudes and calamities incident to its mighty struggle so glorious and so just.

In this argument we have only followed the course adopted by philosophers in their study of the sciences, who, from a multitude of observations made at different intervals, arrive at their conclusion respecting the general laws of all physical phenomena. If single observations should give a result slightly different from that to which the generality lead, they conclude, without hesitation, that the fault is theirs, the error in their observation, and that the even line is the general law; so have we determined the direct movement of the middle ages in relation to the sun of justice, from a series of observations, the inequality and errors of which, taken separately, are compensated by their accumulation.

In conclusion, it falls not to the historian's office to show how the third object of the hunger after justice, which is that of glory, which the blessed suffer in celestial glory, in whom is always the desire, not penal of what is absent, but beatific of what is present, was fulfilled to the generations past, for that would lead him beyond the limits of earth and time, to speak of things heavenly and eternal. It will be sufficient to hear a Bernardine of Sienna, briefly declare what hunger and fulness must have been theirs, when he says, that, "in the intelligence there will be a thirst after the divine vision, which will be satiated by seeing God; in the memory a thirst after divine security, satisfied by the promise of possessing God, and all things in God for ever, according to the words of Christ, '*et gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis*;' and in the will a thirst after divine love, which will be satiated in beholding the end of all consummation in the act of the will, to which as nobler than that of the intelligence, is annexed the joy of inebriation from the fulness of his house and from the torrent of his pleasure. Thus are we to understand the last sounds—'*non esurient neque sitient amplius.*' "

As swimmers are often carried down with the stream a long way before they can reach the shore, so have I suffered myself to be borne along by this discourse. Yet I have not indulged in any wanton digressions, but the force of the subject itself carried me away; and if I should have returned to things that had been before considered in relation to the meek, their no less intimate connection with justice compelled me to do so. It was one on which it was difficult to speak passably well; for he that had acquaintance with it will think that I have not said enough, and he who has no knowledge of it will suppose that I have been guilty of exaggeration. Moreover, the knowledge of such histories and monuments as have been cited here, belongs not to all men alike, for as Clemens Alexandrinus says, "Some men only see the body of the writing, the letters, and names, as it were, the body of Moses, but others discern the mind and thoughts which are



conveyed under these names. They see, as it were, the angels that co-operated with Moses." \* But, for the sixth vision hasteneth to an end, here break we off, content with the general impressions which must have been produced by this vast spectacle, without seeking at the end to present any other recapitulation but what may be gathered from the indistinct, blissful sounds—the short transcendent fragments proclaiming an eternal victory, that seem to float around us. How could we coolly return to review and analyze with the art of a cautious and ambitious rhetorician, the pageantry of heaven's grace which we have in a manner partially beheld! "Domine, domine noster : quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra !" Reader, you have in these words the recapitulation, the best epitome of the whole argument. The vision dies as it were away, and yet the sense of sweet that sprang from it still remaineth in the heart. As we close this book, which tells of the long thirst appeased, methinks a song angelic is heard, and holy, holy, holy, accordant with the just triumphant a renovated world sings.

\* Stromat. Lib. VI. c. 15.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.





